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## THE INDIAN SCENE



“Those who read the *Westminster Gazette* must have perused with singular pleasure the series of articles in which the distinguished editor of that journal has reproduced his impressions of India. Mr. J. A. Spender, who was here for the Durbār, spent a very short time in the country, and he has written a great deal about it. But we venture to say that no one has written so fully on Indian questions, after a limited experience, with greater insight, with greater shrewdness, or with greater fairness. That may sound a little extravagant, but we believe the opinion will be endorsed by every qualified reader of these articles. We can only hope that Mr. Spender will republish them exactly as they appeared in his paper, so that they may be more widely appreciated and judged as a whole.”—*Times of India*.

“We have often enough been told of the advantage of subjecting Indian affairs to the criticism of such intelligent visitors as may be able by their freedom from local or official prepossessions to illuminate questions of policy, however much they may err from ignorance in matters of detail. The theoretical advantages of having such criticism we have always admitted, but we have very seldom found the Indian impressions of itinerating journalists of much value. . . . So often have we had occasion to quarrel with them that it is most refreshing to discover such temperate, sensible, and suggestive criticism as that which Mr. J. A. Spender, Editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, has been writing in that journal. Here at length is a survey of Indian affairs by a visitor not an expert on the subject, as M. Chailley was, but of real value.”—*Madras Mail*.

# THE INDIAN SCENE

BY

J. A. SPENDER

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## PREFACE

**M**OST of the following chapters were written as articles for the "Westminster Gazette" during the winter of 1911-12, without the slightest intention of republishing them in book form. But friends who have spent as many years in India as I have days, have encouraged me to think that the impressions of a man who comes new to the country from observing administration nearer home, can be recorded without impertinence, if they are taken for what they are worth and no more.

than they are worth. The only hope I venture to entertain is that this simple record of a first journey may communicate to the reader a faint reflection of the brilliancy and fascination of the Indian Scene as it dawns upon the traveller from the West. And if at the same time it should chance to awaken any young man who is in doubt about his career to the absorbing interest of the problem of Indian Government, it will more than have served its purpose.

J. A. S.

45 SLOANE STREET, S.W.

*June, 1912*

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## THE INDIAN SCENE



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## CHAPTER I

### ON THE ROAD TO INDIA

An "incontestable" fact—The traveller and the tourist—The British Empire at sea—The law of the ship-world—Two Orientals

**W**HEN starting from Marseilles, I brought on board with me a carefully selected packet of "the twenty best books"—never mind which—on the advice of friends who pointed out the manifold opportunities which a voyage would offer of making good the lapses in my education. I have not looked at one of them, and four days hence I shall land in Bombay without

having even untied the parcel. It is more probable that the ship will founder than that I shall find a vacant hour for the "Paradiso" of Dante. The mind of the stay-at-home who goes South and East for the first time is in a constant ferment with the effort to realize his impressions as they rush by. For the first time I am beginning to get into me some idea of the shape, size, colour, and smell of the world. Hitherto I have taken on trust what the maps tell me about the shape of Europe; but in a peculiar way it becomes fact as one goes from end to end of the Mediterranean, feeling Italy and Greece slipping away behind one, catching the first lights from the African coast exactly where the map said they ought to be, realizing the length and distance of it all under the bracing stimulus of a thousand miles of north-east gale. No longer shall I need Lord Salisbury's advice to consult a big map.

The map for me is in process of becoming a planet, on which I see, as from an observatory in another world, the marking of the waterways, the outline of the coasts, and even in a dim way the shape of the continents. "It is incontestable," cabled the late King of the Belgians to his Prime Minister on the day when the Suez Canal was opened, "that I have passed in a ship from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea." I who write am able to make the same affirmation, and I am not sure I ever quite believed it possible before. It is also incontestable—or at all events the "oldest traveller" on board vouches for it—that I have seen Somaliland on my right hand and Arabia on my left at the far end of the Red Sea. No one ever told me before that you could see Somaliland on the way to India, still less that it has an enchanting coast-line of low foot-hills beyond which you look over forests to distant blue moors.

The difference between the traveller and the tourist is forcibly brought home to me on this ship. A handful of us are tourists unashamed. We are going to India to see the Durbar and as much else as may be crammed into a feverish seven weeks. Of the remaining three hundred a good third are "going home," as they keep saying, "home" being Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland, Wellington, or some other delectable city or green spot which they have satisfied themselves by careful comparison is without equal in England or Europe. London, they tell you, is all very well for six weeks, but give them Sydney\* or Melbourne to live in. Another third is going back after leave to India, many of them as frankly reluctant as boys returning to school after the holidays. By and by, when we have got past Aden and are in Indian waters, the East will have caught them again and their leave be forgotten, but for the moment

the pull is backwards. Wives and children have been left behind. The thought of the things that may happen before they come this way again is heavy upon them. The last third are a mixed group of all ages and destinations. This gallant old lady, seventy years and upwards, is going to join a daughter in New Zealand, just for a winter's jaunt. This lad of eighteen, fresh from a public school, finds himself surprisingly consigned to a business house in Java, just about the time when his school contemporaries are starting as Freshmen at Oxford and Cambridge. His knowledge of Java is as vague and sketchy as my own, but he has a cheerful confidence that it will be all right. A dozen other lads are bound for Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Singapore, Hong-Kong, and some mark themselves down for remote lands and settlements I have never heard of and can find on no map. The average age of this group



cannot be more than twenty-one, and I marvel at the courage of the parents at home who launch them alone on these great waters and leave them to find their little niches in heaven knows what company and surroundings on the far side of the world. Presently they will be scattered, and in all human probability will never meet again; but for the moment they are strong friends, and some admirable women—wives going out to join official husbands in the Far East—have taken upon themselves to play the mothers' part. Then there are the old hands making the journey for the twentieth time, the forester going to Cambodia for teak, whose journey is as intricate an affair of changes and junctions as a cross-country expedition from Guildford to Birmingham, half a dozen agents in pursuit of new markets, Chinese Customs officials, and so forth.

I must cut this catalogue short, but let

the reader who wants to realize the British Empire reflect on it. The ship we are on, though undoubtedly the biggest and most important, is only one of several going the same route. I have merely taken a sample at random from its first-class passengers. Every week for a large part of the year three or four ships come down the Bay and through the Mediterranean bearing this freight of dutiful officials and their women-kind, business agents, and stout-hearted, active young men committing themselves to the unknown with cheerful confidence in their stars. We have some 8,000 mail-bags on board and 600 baskets of parcel-post—no doubt an unusually large number, for we are carrying the Christmas mail for China and Australia, as well as innumerable packages to replenish the shops of Delhi and Calcutta against the Durbar. But to see this mail come on board is again part of the process of turning vague

ideas into facts. It is a great mountain of letters, and those of British origin vastly outnumber all the others put together, though we are carrying for all Europe. So long as these mail-bags multiply, we need not fear for the ties of sentiment. For hours I stood watching under the flare of the searchlight at Port Said, while Arab coolies worked like ants at the great heaps of Christmas greetings for Australia and New Zealand, which pass from white man to white man through innumerable brown and black hands. Nothing in the working of the ship quite touches you as this business of handling the mails on a night when the stars are up and the line of coolies is seen in silhouette against the ship's flare.

Travellers are proverbially grumblers, and I suppose to the end of time they will go on complaining. I can only say, as a stay-at-home, that I have never imagined

anything so beautifully organized, so smooth in its working, so admirably prepared for all ordinary emergencies, as the P. and O. liner I am on. For lessons of civility, good manners, and patience under provocation, go to a ship's company on a passenger liner. The stewards are surely the best servants in the world, and they have that touch of manliness and independence which marks the sea-service, in spite of the completeness of its discipline in all ranks. The ship-world has evolved a law and custom of its own which the landsman feels the first day he comes aboard, but which he finds extremely difficult to put into words. It is based on the fundamental idea of a limited space in which every one must be as little inconvenient as possible to every one else. You acquire your claim on condition that you never exceed it. You may do what you like in your own cabin, and be as sea-sick as you choose ;

but, if you come on deck, you must be cheerful and not enlarge on your sufferings. Your chair is sacred, provided it respects the sanctity of other chairs and does not protrude its leg-rest into the preserve of the deck-quoits. With the aid of the code, a miscellaneous company of people behaves, as a rule, far better than it would in a hotel on shore ; under a good captain and a fine company of officers, the ship gets a character and a quality which one finds elsewhere only in a good school or college. If I said all that I should like to say about the ship I am on, the reader might suspect me of being an advertising agent for the P. and O. Company, so let me briefly record the impression that this mail service is one of the finest in the world, and that any parent might be proud to have a son in it and sailing under such a captain as Captain H. On the other hand, let me add a word of criticism

on two points. The first is that the P. and O. Company worries you with a variety of small charges, such as the extra pound for an electric fan, which had far better be lumped in the fare; the second is that in rough weather there is sad need of sheltered deck-space, which might easily be provided if there were a sufficiency of tarpaulins to keep the rain and sea out.

Another traveller's complaint which, so far as I was concerned, was entirely baseless, is that respecting the Red Sea. True, it is hot, but not intolerably so, during the months that travellers most frequent it, and when we went down it a fresh head-wind gave us always a cooling draught. The approach to it from the Gulf of Suez is superb, and, as evening drew on, the mountains of Sinai lay in a shimmer of opalescent light to the east, while the Egyptian hills made a purple and

scarlet bonfire against the sun to the west. Never in northern waters will you see such a green as the Red Sea makes towards evening. It is a deep indigo green, with transparent blue depths in it, all alive with the south wind and incomparably vivid against the sandy shore. The exit is as beautiful as the approach, and you come down to Aden with both shores visible: the African pale blue, with a hint of forest and high moor on the horizon; the Asiatic, scorched red rocks with a strip of very yellow sand between them and the green sea. The Turks have extinguished their lights on the islands, but the traveller need not be afraid on that score, for the P. and O. captains navigated these waters for years before there were any lights, and can feel their way through the archipelago on the darkest nights. We came to it half an hour after dawn, and a vision of lovely brown rocks through

my port-hole brought me quickly on deck to watch the passage.

*Later.*

Like the mails, we have been sorted out and fined down to the Indian contingent, which was transhipped at Aden to the smaller boat that plies across the Indian Ocean. She is comfortable and quick, but don't believe that this sea is calm in November. We are pitching gaily in the north-east monsoon, and my pen jumps back at my nose as soon as I think I have got it safely on paper. On board the "Salsette" signs of the Durbar become visible in the shape of two Sultans going with their retainers to Delhi on the invitation of the Government of India. They are important people in their way, for they keep the hinterland of Aden, which would be no joke for us if they became testy. One is a quiet, middle-aged man in frock-



coat and fez, who has kept his cabin since the wind rose ; the other is a rare type of the antique world, with a pink beard and a wardrobe of the richest variety. He appears to change his costume every two hours, and has a different turban for each change. He is also consumed with curiosity about every one on board, and the interpreter is kept running backwards and forwards with questions which must be answered. He has with him his son and heir, a fascinating child in an apricot silk tunic. In vivid contrast with this personage is another Oriental potentate, who came on board at Marseilles. He commands the allegiance of millions of Mohammedans in India, but this does not prevent him from being a most accomplished and versatile man of the European world, who is deeply read in modern literature and talks of our politics with an astonishing knowledge of its personalities and their values. This

remarkable man is equally at home with the old Sultan and with sophisticated Westerners like myself. After a long and intimate talk with the former about the politics of the Mohammedan world, he goes back to his deck-chair and resumes his comparative study of Bergson and Herbert Spencer. With these two Orientals before me, I feel myself on the fringe of the Indian problem.

## CHAPTER II

### BOMBAY

The variety of the East—A street scene—English and Indian—A theory of “unrest”—At the Yacht Club

THE first sight of India leaves the mind in a whirl. I understand now why Anglo-Indian writers have found it necessary to invent a language of their own, consisting largely of untranslatable and unintelligible heathen words. For Bombay is full of a multitude of things for which I am unable to find a name. In a European town there is some kind of unity which explains the people and their surroundings, and enables you to think of them as a community. Here

there is none. I never imagined such variety as Bombay displays in its circuit of twenty miles. I have driven in a taxi-cab for two hours through the native town and out into the villages beyond, and am trying in vain to sort my impressions. Every street swarms with people, and no half-dozen seem alike. There are white men, brown men, yellow men, chocolate men, and very nearly black men. Their costume varies from the frock-coat to the loin-cloth, through a brilliant scale of orange, vermilion, green, blue, and brown. There are troops of children, apparently free of school, and some of these, again, are stark naked, while others are elaborately decked out, as for some fantastic children's carnival. The women are as various as the men and children, and the darker skins affect the brightest colours. Scores of opulent native gentlemen thread their

way in and out the crowds in the newest motor-cars; and other handsome carriages, shuttered or curtained, suggest the presence of the purdah women. There is an incessant hubbub; the slightest transaction appears to require the unloosing simultaneously of all tongues in a wide circle of disinterested spectators, as well as among those immediately concerned. The atmosphere is hot and heavy, and one's collar subsides at the slightest effort. There is an all-pervading smell, not fetid or disagreeable, but distinctly exotic. There are innumerable blue crows, who appear to live on the most amiable terms with the human inhabitants, and keep up an incessant chorus if the human din for a moment subsides.

The houses are as various as the people. The European part of Bombay might be Vienna 'slightly orientalized. The native is a grand jumble of all styles, but it

gives you the queer impression of an immense hive, very intricate and deeply recessed, with layer on layer of people living in a condition of vertical overcrowding which must give the plague its richest opportunities. The absence of glass enables you to look right into the heart of the houses, and the back rooms are little dark caverns. The main impression is that they swarm with people. Every veranda is crowded; there is a head or two heads at every window. I have some acquaintance with the East End of London and its crowded tenements, but nowhere in London or in any European city that I know, except possibly in one quarter of Naples, have I ever seen anything like this swarming, vivid, various humanity. You might suppose them to be an amiable, tolerant people, jostling each other with a good-natured friendliness which took no account of the differences of creed or

race. And so in a superficial way they must be. No multitude could live thus close-packed without establishing some rough rule of mutual forbearance. Yet those who know them will tell you that this immense jumble of humanity sorts itself into hundreds of intensely separate little heaps, each of which is guarded from the others by an unimaginable code of pride or prejudice. You soon learn to distinguish a Parsee, and after a little instruction you may flatter yourself—quite wrongly—that you know a Hindu from a Mohammedan. But ‘here you come to a dead stop,’ and you are scarcely at the beginning. Either Hindu or Mohammedan may belong to any one of a dozen different races, and the Hindu may, according to his caste, be the most exalted of human kind or at a depth so low as hardly to be or to reckon himself human. You have all the time to think

of this gay, chattering mass of humanity as seamed and chasmed by lines of division in which a European can scarcely discover any intelligible meaning at all.

This, however, does not leap to the eye, and for the moment I am concerned only with the impressions which strike a new-comer ignorant of these things. Bombay must be the despair of the Indian sanitary reformer. The grey and brown slums of an English town are bad enough, but these brilliant, bizarre, sun-smitten slums of Bombay, with the plague in their dark places, give you a shudder such as you could get in no Northern country. There is, you feel instinctively, something poisonous in their glittering squalor. The medical service has done and is doing its best, but it is helpless against the passive resistance of a people which will live its own life in its own way, and has all manner of religious and racial prejudices that



are fatal to scientific medicine. In the meantime the attitude of the European is one of silence and resignation. No one talks of plague, and all but the very nervous cease to think about it. My host on Malabar Hill throws a glance, as the twilight deepens, towards the burning ghauts, and, as there is no red glow in the sky, surmises that the plague is low. I passed along them the next morning, and the pungent odour of burning suggested that a great many Hindu bodies must be in process of cremation ; but, after all, Bombay is as big as Liverpool, and a normal death-rate would make smell enough.

From the charming bungalow on Malabar Hill where I am being hospitably entertained I look down on a large, pretentious, stone-built modern house, admirably situated on the seashore, the residence of a wealthy Parsee. Then I look behind me and see the Towers of

Silence, with those obscene semicircles of vultures sitting huddled together round the rims of the two pits, waiting for their next meal. Down there the Parsee lives, as a rich cotton-spinner might near Manchester, and up there he will presently be disposed of, when he has closed his eyes upon his brand-new house. His place of sepulture, meanwhile, offers him a pleasant prospect from his back windows. The contrast between the two things is significant of much. There are scores of such residences in and about Bombay inhabited by rich Parsees, Hindus, and Moham-medans, and to all outward seeming they might be the homes of European *nouveaux riches*. Yet into the vast majority of them no European has ever entered or will ever be invited. There are purdah women behind the curtain; caste has to be maintained, and a life to be lived in which no European can participate. I have talked

to several Englishmen here about the apparently harsh rule which excludes these able and prosperous gentlemen from the English clubs, and they assure me that it is by no means all race prejudice. If a man thinks you unfit to associate with his women-kind, and if he lives half his life in a *milieu* from which he claims rigidly to exclude you, then, according to the English standard, he is not clubbable. There may be friendly intercourse on common ground, but there cannot be the frank *camaraderie* which one member of a club expects from another. Better, it is argued, that each should keep to his own preserve and avoid experiments which, on the delicate ground of native custom and prejudice, might well be disastrous. This is the European case, and I have heard it frequently repeated in India, but it strikes one as rather the "official explanation" than the whole truth about the matter. For it does in a measure take

one's breath away to find the handful of the ruling race asserting themselves so absolutely over these rich and successful men of business, men who veritably possess the place, who have made large fortunes as merchants and cotton-spinners, and who are apparently no whit inferior in managing capacity to successful European men of business. It is as though Manchester or Liverpool were being governed by a handful of Civil Servants, sent not from London, but from Berlin. Yet, if you ask the question, you are told at once that these men have no grievance. British rule, and British alone, has provided them with the opportunity of making their fortunes, and, like capitalists everywhere, they cry out for security. Protection they would like, if we would give it them, which I very much hope we never shall; but seditious they are not, and the idea that it is necessary to purchase their loyalty by giving them the opportunity

of raising the price of cotton upon the millions is, I am assured by a business man of long experience, a complete misunderstanding. My friend generalizes on this subject, and says that unrest is least where the Indians are making the money and greatest where the Europeans are taking the profits. I have no means of testing this, but it has merits as a simple and human explanation.

You must be a very forlorn man in Bombay, if you have not a friend to take you to the Yacht Club. There towards sunset you will find the English colony assembled on a green lawn fronting the sea, with the club-house behind. The view seawards embraces the great circle of the bay, and the distant promontories are deep purple against a flaming orange sunset, which is topped by masses of crimson and warm grey clouds. Tone it all down and in the dim light the view might be that from Plymouth Hoe.

The twilight passes quickly, festoons of electric light make a dazzle on a hundred tea-tables, and an excellent military band strikes up a selection from "Samson and Delilah." While you are here, you forget the great, seething, miasmic city behind you, and wonder at the cheerfulness, smartness, good looks, and good manners of the Bombay English and their womenkind. Civilians or soldiers, they are clearly a strong, self-reliant, well-favoured race, with an indefinable air of being in authority. It is an authority, however, which is not flaunted. You see the native policeman everywhere, but the soldier hardly at all. All the military men are in mufti, and there is no outward sign to distinguish the civilian administrator from an Englishman on business. You hear no big talk ; it is, indeed, the most difficult thing in the world to induce any of them to talk at all about themselves or their duties. They

seem to take for granted that they should be there and doing what they are doing. The first dominant impression you bear away is that they have a great interest in governing and none at all in possessing. Hence, in spite of the alien rule, Bombay strikes you as eminently belonging to itself, as being in fact a real Indian town, and as remote as possible from a British colony. This, perhaps, is the greatest tribute that can be paid to the English who made it, or at least made it possible.

## CHAPTER III

### A JOURNEY NORTH

What India looks like—An Indian railway station—  
Through Rajputana—A village incident

**T**HIS is a homely record of the things that strike a man fresh from London who has never been East before; and it should, therefore, be put aside unread by the expert, the Anglo-Indian, and the serious reader who is looking for the solution of political problems.

As I write, the King and Queen are still on the Indian Ocean, and we are using the interval before going to Delhi for the Durbar in a private pilgrimage of our own through Northern Bombay and Rajputana. • Our



places of halt have been Ahmedabad, Ajmer, and Jeypore, and to-morrow we go to Agra, and thence to Delhi. If I mention this itinerary, it is not with the slightest intention of boring the reader with any laborious account of a tour through this region, but merely to indicate the part of India I am travelling in. That done, I will ask a simple question and endeavour to answer it. What does India look like to a man coming to it for the first time from England? I have read scores of books about India and all Mr. Kipling's and Mrs. Steel's novels, but they do not answer this question, for they are written by people to whom everything is familiar. Somewhere north of Baroda I open the shutters of my sleeping carriage and look about me. It is a flat country with many trees in it, very closely cultivated, and apparently cut up into small fields. Except that pale brown earth on the whole predominates over grass, there is

nothing at first sight to tell you that you are not in Europe or even in England. There are fields in which something which might be spring wheat is coming up, patches which look like a sandy Surrey common with winter gorse upon it, other fields with a pale blue-green grass on which flocks of goats are grazing. But a minute later you see a woman swathed in crimson muslin, then a deep-brown child stark naked, then a group of very thin walnut-coloured men, with white turbans, linen jackets, and bare legs, digging in a field. Another minute, and you see a troop of monkeys, big, loose-limbed fellows, who pass quickly in a kind of ambling gallop. Then the hump-backed cattle begin to come into the landscape, mild-eyed, miniature beasts, with white, grey, fawn, and cream-coloured coats; and after them the buffaloes, straight-backed, lead-coloured animals, with long horns sloping back from their short ears

Next you pass a well with a pair of bullocks drawing water by the simple device of walking away from it and hauling a rope over a wheel, with a bucket at the other end of it. As we approach a village the fields are alive with people, who have arrayed themselves in the vividest crimsons, oranges, greens, yellows, and scarlets for the humble business of agricultural labourer. Turbans of pale pink seem to be specially favoured by the young men, and the children are either naked or fantastically dressed up. By this time the faint resemblance to the English countryside has clearly vanished, and beyond all doubt we are in the heart of the East.

The train slows down, and you draw up at a scene which will fascinate you a hundred times during your travel. There is no boredom in waiting at an Indian railway station. Each one is, to the

Western eye, a riot of colour and fancy, restrained apparently by no sumptuary law or custom. I look in vain to find any two costumes alike or any pattern which is common to the different groups. A venerable gentleman who stands opposite my carriage is dressed in a bright green-flowered silk dressing-gown, with white pyjamas underneath, and on his head is a rose-pink turban. A woman near him is a shapeless mass of orange cotton. A young man has achieved a half-European costume with the aid of a coat which looks exactly like a college blazer. He wears a dark red fez on his head, and his legs are tightly swathed in white linen putties. Then there is a tiny child with embroidered coat and absurd little buff trousers ending in red shoes. On his head is a flat round hat with an embroidered band round it. A very singular effect is produced by an old man

who wears a crimson turban with a grey frock-coat and clothes his legs in a careless swathe of white muslin. Enumeration, however, becomes tedious. The people flame and glitter at you. You have the sense not of one grey mass of humankind, but of a great variety of highly coloured species.

We have wasted ten minutes beyond our time while a party of purdah ladies is being got out of a second-class carriage. It is a tedious business, conducted with much solemn caution by those who are in charge of it, but exciting no curiosity among the bystanders. It is rather like taking a swarm of bees. An immense sheet is produced and held in front of the carriage. This is developed into an oblong canopy when the ladies get out, as apparently they do with great circumspection. The mass moves forward two or three paces, to get clear of the train,

and is left standing, like a great white box, in the middle of the platform, while some one goes to find the carriage to which it is to be transferred. What it would do if it had to cross the line is beyond conjecture. But we leave that problem behind us, and are speeding on our way northward. The country changes as we pass out of the Bombay Presidency into Rajputana. We are running through a wide plain between parallel mountain ridges, which, if the map tells the truth, stretch the whole way to Delhi. Instead of fields, there are vast prairie-like spaces, scorched to a uniform pale brown. Yet there must be something to eat on them, for one sees cattle and flocks of goats, and a good many people about, acting as herdsmen or gathering something from the inhospitable soil. Except just in the neighbourhood of the towns, there is nothing that an Englishman would call a

house, and a road is the rarest incident. Occasionally there are low enclosures with mud walls, which you conjecture to be villages, and near them you see wells and patches of green. If you look carefully at one of these patches, you see that the crops are sown in little squares separated by mud partitions, into which the water is led from channels cutting across them. This is clearly a thirsty land. It is not many weeks since the rains were over, and the wells are moderately full, but the soil looks absolutely parched and the river-beds are dry sand. So they will remain till next July, when the rains are due again; and, if the rain fail, then famine. Still, there must be moisture in the subsoil, for the trees are fairly plentiful and look fat and well nourished. Most of them are of the acacia type, but there is a large, deep-green, thick-leaved tree which looks like an

enormous india-rubber plant. This is the famous pipal.

Fifty miles farther, and the mountains come closer together, and we are traveling through a country which, if the soil was red instead of pale brown, and if olives took the place of acacias, might be any stretch of Provence between Lyons and Marseilles. The mountains are of the same warm brown, and are corrugated by steep water-channels in the familiar Provençal manner. The resemblance vanishes, however, before the appearance of a string of camels, with men riding, followed by a group of women with all manner of burdens on their heads. The Rajput women walk beautifully, and nothing could be more graceful than the long swinging step of the water-carriers with the bulbous jars on their heads. The next station gives us a closer look at the Rajput men—fine, tall fellows, with



clean-cut profiles and big black eyes which look you straight in the face, with none of the deprecating air of the Bombay Hindu. A few miles farther, and the mountains again recede, and we are out upon another vast stretch of yellow-brown prairie, which looks drier and dustier than ever. Buck with straight horns grooved in spirals are pretty plentiful here, and there are large birds, among which I can make out the big brown kite and the long-tailed green parrot, but most are unknown to me. The vegetation consists of blue-grey scrub, with large clumps of pampas grass at irregular intervals. There are villages which look like collections of American Indians' wigwams, and rather squalid at that. Now and again there is a pond or tank, and beside it almost invariably a crane, heron, or some other long-legged, big-billed bird.

And so we run into the night under a

crimson and orange sunset, delicately veiled in Indian dust. The pungent, penetrating smell of burning horse-dung (which is *the* smell of all India) stings the nostrils; there is a chill in the air, and a malarious pink mist on the distant mountains. The train jerks up at another station, and our carriage stops just where a portly old gentleman with a pink turban has spread his carpet on the platform and is doing his devotions with his face towards Mecca and the West. I step out to talk with the guard, an old soldier from a Scottish regiment, who has taken on this job at the end of his service rather than go home. He tells me that the day before yesterday a tiger came down to a village we passed a few miles back, and, though some officers went out after him, he was still at large. And less than three weeks ago I was in Fleet Street!

## CHAPTER IV

### TWO INDIAN CITIES

Ahmedabad—An inventory of the Indian scene—A city of temples—The Indian litter—India in the making—Ajmer—A famous shrine

#### I. AHMEDABAD

**A** SQUARE patch of garden with roses in it, and stone bungalows round three sides of the square. This is the hotel at Ahmedabad. The bungalows to right and left are bedrooms of the Indian type, and that in the centre is dining-room and kitchen. There are no other rooms. For drawing-room or smoking-room you use the verandas of the bungalows, and these are fitted with the typical Indian easy

chair, whose arms are extended to accommodate your legs. There are cocks and hens for breakfast, lunch, and dinner—I use these words to indicate a real difference between the Indian and English fowl—and if you want more, there are eggs for dinner, lunch, and breakfast. Compared with many Indian up-country hotels, this is a home of luxury; but the traveller fresh from Europe has to be broken to Indian methods of sanitation, and after the sun has set, there is a deep darkness with mosquitoes in it which is barely mitigated by oil-lamps. And then, again, if you are new to it, there are the Indian noises, which suggest the near presence of very wild men, and are greatly heightened in effect by the entire absence of locks or barriers, and your own guilty knowledge that a thousand rupees are lurking under your pillow.

Still the sun shines in the morning, and in

the little garden courtyard is everything that you have been led to expect—pipal-trees in the middle, scores of delicious little striped squirrels running up and down them and along the paths; two great brown kites, which threaten perpetually but do nothing; the mina bird, with tremolo and crescendo on one note, stopping dead just when you think it is going to begin; hundreds of pigeons and doves, and of course the inevitable insatiable Indian crow. Let it be taken for granted that this is the inventory of almost every scene in India. Other things may be added, such as green parrots, mosques, temples, and tombs, but these are almost always there. Having carefully counted them up, we started to explore Ahmedabad in the light-hearted manner of English tourists, in cloth caps, straw hats, tweed suits, serge dresses. The morning, we said, was cool and fresh, the sun diffused a pleasant and tempered

warmth. Ten minutes later we had turned our horses back and were flying for cover. All of us simultaneously had felt that something sharp and bitter on the nape of the neck by which the Indian or tropical sun proclaims his difference from all northern suns. One touch is enough; for ever afterwards you treat him with respect, and submit to the *sola topee*.

Ahmedabad takes you with a plunge into the religions of India. The most be-churched city of Italy or Spain is secular compared to it. One small sect of Hindus, the Jains, alone claim to have a hundred and twenty temples in it. All roads lead to mosques, tombs, and holy places; the crowded populous city, as displayed to you by your guide, is but a labyrinth of alleys and passages leading from one to another. The town itself is incredibly squalid and vivid. The impression has since worn off, for all Indian cities are much alike in this

respect, but never before had I imagined anything so untidy. The only things neatly arranged are the little square compartments of different coloured grain to be seen on the stalls in the grain bazaar. All else is a disordered, dusty, garish litter. The entire contents of the houses seem to have been thrown aimlessly into the roadway in front of them, and you pick your way between pots and pans and beds and broken chairs and delicately fretted brass vessels. There is the same sense of aimless litter about the people and the animals. Everybody is talking at once, but no one seems to be doing anything except the drivers of the bullock-carts, who dig their teams in the ribs with a pole, and when that fails, catch hold of the animals' tails and twist them vigorously. The sleek sacred bull with the shambling gait wanders where he chooses, and takes his food from any shop that offers a diet convenient to him. The

goat is everywhere—the silly-looking Indian goat with the tiny head and bulging nose—and fowls, of course, by the thousand. Everything is covered with dust, and a good many of the houses seem to be tumbling in, but there is no corner of the city where you may not look up and see an entrancing carved balcony or exquisitely fretted lattice window, and in the dullest, dustiest roadway the blaze and sparkle of the human throng under the midday sun assail the eye till it longs for a patch of grey.

But I am wandering from the temples and mosques which the guide-book tells you are the great features of the “strangely neglected” (by the tourist) city of Ahmedabad. My bearer, Habib, who insists on accompanying us, being a strict Moham-medan from the north, will never let us see a Hindu temple if he can avoid it; and he shamelessly concealed from us



the existence of the great Jain temple, with fifty-three domes, which is the modern glory of the place. Also, he insisted on the fact that the mosques—or a large number of them—had been built out of the remains of previously destroyed Hindu sanctuaries. Whether this is the true explanation or not, the typical Ahmedabad mosque or tomb is Mohammedan in form and Hindu in ornament or workmanship, a curious medley, which is to be seen again at the Kutab Minar, near Delhi, and many another converted shrine where the Moguls have been at work. The Moorish arch is embroidered with intricate shallow-cut ornament of a purely Hindu type. In the same building you may see overloaded barbaric vaulting in the roof, and windows of exquisite fretted stonework in the loveliest Persian designs. The sight of a dozen of these buildings consecutively, ending with the beautiful and mysterious tombs of the Queens

of Ahmad Shah, leaves the Western mind in a complete muddle. You feel at last how much history and tradition lend to the appreciation of a European building. These buildings do not speak to you: the Shahs and Queens thus beautifully commemorated are names out of a guide-book. You grope in vain for dates and associations. You look and wonder as you might at an exhibition of arts and crafts—wonder, often, at the presence of everything which makes for beauty, and the absence of the last touch which gives soul. In the end you bear away with you a slightly blurred vision of brown stone wrought into an infinity of exquisite and extravagant forms, and of rich twilight in domed buildings, whence you emerge suddenly into the blue blaze of Indian midday, among good-humoured jostling crowds that make great splotches of pantomime colour. Finally you go out over the ugly iron bridge

which spans the Sabarmati River, and see half the population assembled in the river-bed, washing themselves or their clothes, filling pig-skins with water, laying out acres of small square carpets—which are the chief industrial products of the place—to dry in the sun after immersion in the muddy stream. Then, as you look back, you see that the domes and minarets of the mosques are outrageously topped by the tall chimneys of a group of big factories, which proclaim the advance of this ancient city into industrialism. In the morning soon after five you are woke by a confusion of noises, in which tom-toms and calls to prayer mingle strangely with the sirens of the factories. This is India in the making.

## II. AJMER

Ahmedabad is in the Bombay Presidency ; Ajmer is the capital of a small British enclave

in the heart of the Rajput States, a garrison town governed by the agent of the Governor-General for Rajputana, whose head-quarters are at Abu, fifty miles or so to the north-east. With all its British accessories, it is in some ways the least British of all the towns I have seen in India. I never saw a white face within the native city, which is a winding maze of narrow streets, thronged with the vivid Eastern crowd. The houses are ancient and beautiful, and many of them have exquisite loggias with carved pillars and intricately wrought lattice windows of Moorish type. Just outside the city is the Ana Saugār, a great artificial lake constructed in the eleventh century, with a noble range of white marble pavilions on its banks. The gleam of this marble, the view across the water to the mountains, the flights of wild ducks, geese, and teal, the rich green foliage in the gardens by the shore, combine to make a brilliant picture

under the morning sun. Let thanks be rendered to Lord Curzon, who has cared for this beautiful spot, as for many another in India, and seen that the ancient pavilions were delicately and carefully restored.

Ajmer is full of pilgrims from all parts of India who are making their way to the famous shrine of the saintly Chisti. I can discover little about this worthy except that he lived in the thirteenth century and is one of the very few holy men who are venerated by Hindus and Mohammedans alike. But his shrine is glorious. Think of a large enclosure entered by a towering gateway, with court within court inside, the first with a dazzling white marble mosque, the second with an exquisite pavilion of the same material, richly inlaid with porphyry and alabaster, its four white domes and their spires gleaming with copper gilt, gold and silver lamps hanging from the eaves, canopies of silk Persian curtains thrown out

from its sides—but, there, description is impossible; the thing defeats you by its richness and variety, and the sheen of it all in the blazing sun is past belief. Hitherto I had only dimly imagined what white marble looks like against the real Eastern blue sky. To complete the picture you must add immense pipal-trees in the courtyards, arched cloisters round three sides of each enclosure, huge jars holding water for the pilgrims, very ancient sacred ovens to cook their food in, scores of squirrels, various kinds of repulsive-looking holy men, priests praying or reciting from the Koran, and an incessantly moving dense crowd of all sorts and colours. Incautiously I put one foot across the threshold of the central pavilion, and a dozen of the bystanders rush up and gently remove it. There is no ill-will, but it is the tomb of the saint and only the faithful may enter.

Yet the picture of Ajmer I take away

with me is not this, but the view of the city from the unromantic flat roof of the railway station. It lies white in the morning sun, encircled on three sides by mountains rising to three thousand feet, up which the old brown walls run precipitously to forts on the heights. The mountains are dead gold, with a veil of sparkling silver thrown over them. The description sounds extravagant, but I can think of nothing else. The veil is the much-abused dust of India, rising from the plain, and catching the sun as it ascends. It gives you a chronic slight sore throat when you are driving or travelling, but morning or evening it adds a glory to the atmosphere which you will not see elsewhere.

## CHAPTER V

### IN CAMP AT DELHI

The great camp and the component camps—The pageant of the Princes—The human variety—Decorations in Delhi—The central scene—The great secret and its revelation—A question of costume—The deification of the King-Emperor

THE great Durbar has passed into history and its site has returned to the plough or the jackal, till such time as another transformation may convert it to a more permanent, if less romantic, use. It remains, nevertheless, the centre of the Indian scene for those who went out to see it in the winter of 1911, and a few impressions taken from a diary of the week



December 10 to 17 may be set down at this point.

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As you walk along the Ridge at Delhi—that central and most sacred spot in British Indian history—you look down on a sea of tents. Take a few steps downwards and it is half-screened by green trees in the foreground, but from the higher levels it stretches away unbroken for two miles across the plain. At first glance it seems to be a muddle of all sizes and shapes, but descend into it, and you find it to be a most cunningly designed canvas town, intersected by roads, varied by gardens and polo grounds, provided with post offices, telegraph and telephone stations, and possessing a ceinture railway of its own to take you from camp to camp or into Delhi city. The roads have familiar names, Mall and Kingsway, and, though creations of yesterday, are broad and smooth

and excellently designed for pageants. Just under the Ridge, on the eastern boundary of the area, is the King-Emperor's camp, with the old Durbar house in its grounds. It is neat but not gaudy, and is sufficiently impressive, without challenging the Eastern gaieties and splendours of the Native Princes' camp. Two miles away, at the northern end, is the Amphitheatre, which is the scene of the principal outdoor ceremonials. The Processional route between the Royal camp and this Amphitheatre is lined with innumerable camps of all sizes and kinds, and in them are gathered all the principalities and powers of India—the Viceroy and his Council, Governors, Lieutenant-Governors, and Chief Commissioners, great and wealthy Princes, petty chiefs, men from the plains, men from the mountains, men from across the border, Sultans from Arabia and the regions about Aden. Each has his own

camp and his retinue, but to enumerate them would be to write a Homeric catalogue, a task for which I am wholly unequal and which would not enlighten the reader.

The great Durbar Camp is a collection of smaller camps, each of which has its own garden and enclosure, with entrance gates and semicircular drive. Most are surrounded with convolvulus hedges in full flower; there are chrysanthemums and palms in the gardens, and heroic efforts have been made to make them look green. Where grass has failed, mustard and cress or some other low-growing green vegetable has been planted and makes a cunning substitute. The commonest type of camp consists of large square tents in pairs, one behind the other, on two sides of an oblong on the far side of which is a group of large marquees, either shamianahs or roofed tents, connecting by canvas passages with

each other. In these are drawing-room, dining-room, and smoking-room, and concealed behind them are the kitchens and service rooms. All these "big tents" are elaborately carpeted and furnished, warmed with stoves, and lit with electric light. They make luxurious club-rooms for the colony, which has its bedrooms in the smaller tents grouped round the square. The idea that you rough it or suffer any hardships from camp life in the Coronation Camp is a complete delusion—at all events, if you are fortunate enough to be entertained, as we are, by a hospitable high official. Your tent is charmingly furnished, warmed with a stove, and lit with electric light. You sleep in a comfortable bed with spring mattresses, and have a Persian carpet to your feet. Your servants have their tents outside, and are always within call. The bathroom is thrown out behind, and makes a separate

room. You will hear the jackals by night and may be awoke in the morning by a scuffle of crows tobogganing down your canvas roof—a game they play incessantly—but these are the only touches of wild nature in your smooth and pleasant existence.

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The ruling Princes have let their fancy loose and spent lavishly on their camps. Kashmir with its elaborately carved wooden enclosure wall (since presented to the King), and Hyderabad with its more austere, but stately and dignified expanse of garden and tented space, are specially admired. But half a dozen others barely fall short of these, and a score more are on the scale befitting the ruling Prince. Some have triumphal arches—one, I specially noticed, is adorned throughout with a very chaste design in silver-gilt spoons--and some substitute ornate little

buildings in concrete of the White City type for the central shamianahs. Most of them are gay with bunting and illuminated at night with a profusion of electric lights, which entirely outshines the modest display of the Government of India and Provincial camps. There is probably within the camps of the Native Princes the finest collection of Oriental rugs, carpets, embroideries, and hangings in the whole world, and a fire in this area would destroy a vast number of priceless and irreplaceable things. The jewellery and the state robes of gold and silver tissue are on the most extravagant scale.\* In the procession the Maharajahs wear their jewels as horses wear harness, and you look on miles of glittering fabrics until your eye is wearied with the dazzle of them. Many of the Princes have brought their regalia, which varies from gold and silver maces and big symbolic objects, for which I have no

name, but which appear to be of solid precious metal, to the painted fans and tinselled horse-trappings of the petty chiefs. Here, as elsewhere, India gives you every variety. This group might come from Central Africa; that one might be dressed for a state ball at Windsor Castle. I hear Western people around me laughing at the absurd get-up of a chief from Bhutan, but some of them, I will swear, went to the Coronation at Westminster last year in costumes which would look quite as outlandish to his eyes, and which have nothing but custom to make them less ridiculous.

It is not, however, the grandees or their fine clothes and sumptuous shamianahs that make the chief interest of this place, but the vast number of different sorts of men that are gathered together in it. The intelligent traveller goes about like a tiresome child, asking endless questions which no one can

answer. Where does that brown man come from; why does he carry that thing on his back; why aren't his servants the same colour as himself; why does this man stain his beard pink and dress in silver tissue, while that one dyes his beard black and dresses in white cotton? Where are Bhor, Sachin, Rajpipla, Chamba, Bamra, Chhatarpur, and a dozen other names that one reads casually on the gateposts of different camps? It comforts one a little to hear hardened old Anglo-Indians asking each other the same questions and failing to get answers. My ignorance is abysmal, but who is there that knows or ever can know the whole of this country?

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I have spoken about the variety of the human species which strikes you on landing in Bombay; but here in this camp it is carried to a fantastic point by an



artificial agglomeration of all the clans. The Durbar is a vast animated museum of all the human specimens that India provides, and there is an inexhaustible interest in just walking about and looking at it. Ethnology is veiled in the West; here it is sharply defined in face, form, dress, and colour of skin. As you walk about London you may conjecture that this or that man may have French or Italian blood in him; here the people are unmitigated Punjabis, Bengalis, Rajputs, Pathans, Baluchis, Madrassesees. They are divided by race, united loosely by religion, which again divides them. Such unity as there is is imposed upon them by the Central Government, and, as one looks upon this scene, it is impossible at present to think of them as united in any other way.

I have just returned from a drive through the camp and into the city of Delhi. The road is thronged all the way with smart

English folk in motors, innumerable ekkas—small native carriages with little square canopies stretched above tiny platforms, on which four people will squat, with two on the box in addition—Ruling Princes in four-horse landaus swarming with retainers, and escort in front and behind, all ablaze with blue, scarlet, purple, and gold; carriages that look like meat-safes on wheels; every shape and size of buggy and cart, scandalously overloaded, according to our Western notions; and occasionally camel carriages, and even carriages drawn by six camels.

Inside the Kashmir Gate we came upon a Jain procession—elephants smothered in tinsel, with canopied images on their backs, priests on other elephants, and apparently the entire contents of several temples carried by bearers in a procession which would far outshine the gaudiest that could be seen in Spain or Southern Italy. Though it occupied the whole of a long street,• and

came within hailing distance of the great mosque, it appeared to be treated with tolerant good-humour by the sightseers, the vast majority of whom were Moham-medans.

The narrow streets of Delhi are a mass of decorations, not planned on a uniform design as in Bombay, but to all appearances the free manifestations of the lively fancy of the separate householders. Since there are no two houses of the same shape and size in the whole city, this is a good scheme, and the result is a delightful Oriental medley, which is only spoilt when some more ambitious shopkeeper decides to be European. The crowds are dense, and your carriage can only creep. After three hours spent in looking on this scene, I throw caution to the winds and come away entirely convinced that we are witnessing the most extraordinary demonstration ever made by this country to any of its

rulers—a thing of deep, perhaps unfathomable, meaning for the King-Emperor and his Government.

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Of all pageants and ceremonials the great Durbar itself was by far the most beautiful and wonderful I have ever seen. It combined three things, each perfectly in its place—a great popular demonstration, an assembly of the richest and most powerful in the splendid Oriental manner, and a magnificent military display, with the King and Queen as centre and climax of all three. Imagine a vast amphitheatre, not less than half a mile in circumference, of which one-half consists of a great covered structure, filled with the grandees, high officials, ruling Princes and their retinues, visitors of honour ; and the other half of great mounds of people in the open, under a brilliant, scorching sun. In the middle are two pavilions hung with red velvet embroidered

with gold, one of which projects further into the centre, and has a gleaming gilt dome. Both are charming structures, which do credit to the designer. In the first, which is technically a shamianah, the King receives the homage of the high officials and Native Princes, and from that he advances with the Queen along a crimson-carpeted causeway to the second, where on high thrones they can see and are seen by the whole of the vast assembly. To right and left of them are the soldiers—horse, foot, and artillery—in great masses, with the mounted heralds, richly bedizened, who execute charming manœuvres, in the foreground. The military display is immensely enriched by the variety of the Indian regiments, and the Imperial Cadet Corps, sons of ruling Princes, in blue and silver, come flashing by, superbly mounted.

But this is merely a bald inventory of the scene, and words can give no idea of its

splendour and brilliancy under an Eastern sky. In London the word "crowd" suggests a dim, grey mass. Here it is something incredibly gay and vivid. The tiers of spectators in the distance look like huge flower-beds, in which the blooms are green, yellow, pink, and rose-coloured turbans. The children are so arranged that one mass of them wear blue turbans, the next yellow, and the next pink, and all these make broad bands of colour—not dead, motionless colour, but moving, glittering, animated colour, which catches the sun at innumerable different angles, for every little head is wagging with excitement. There are none of the patches of black which mark the differences of sex in a Western crowd. The men, of course, vastly preponderate, but their finery is gayer and simpler than any that Western women wear, and one sees the whole mass as a blaze of yellow, pink, scarlet, and blue.

In the covered half of the amphitheatre the splendour is of a different kind. The whole of the lower tiers are occupied by the ruling Princes, Maharajahs, Nawabs, Sultans, with their sons and heirs, Ministers, and retinues. These are dressed in velvets, brocades, cloth of gold and silver, and woven fabrics of extraordinary beauty. They are piled with jewels—diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, and rubies of the size and brilliancy of pantomime “properties.” For a display of the jeweller’s art there could be nothing like it elsewhere in the world, and—what cannot be said of Western jewellery—the settings are worthy of the stones. For once the European ladies with their smart toilettes from London and Paris take the second place. The finest of them are dim objects beside the meanest Rajah. I will not dwell on the ritual of the pageant, but I never saw anything in Europe so perfectly organized. From beginning to

end there was no hitch. The King and Queen did their part to perfection, the Queen exciting universal admiration by the grace of her walk and carriage. One after another the high officials and ruling Princes go up to do their homage. It is no slight ordeal to advance across the causeway and to back from the presence and down the steps with all eyes upon them. The Princes salute according to the manner of their country, and one splendid old fellow waves his arms and retires at a dance amid general applause. My Indian friends see differences of intention in some of these salutes, but my Western eye is not trained to catch these subtleties.

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The great Durbar ends with a proclamation read by the Viceroy. He stands forward on the steps of the throne, and we can see that he is speaking, but no voice can be heard in this vast assembly, and it



is useless to conjecture what he is saying. Ten minutes later the printed document is being distributed. There is a scramble for it, and all round the amphitheatre it is being read greedily and hurriedly. Then a great gasp of astonishment. Never was a secret so well kept. A hundred things had been conjectured, but no one had got near the truth. The removal of the capital to Delhi! The reversal of the partition of Bengal! All the other "boons"—lakhs of rupees for education, extra pay for the Army and Civil Servants, remission of sentences for prisoners, etc.—sink into insignificance beside this. No one for the moment has any opinion. Every one is asking every one else what he thinks. I heard a conversation behind me among a group of officials which, as no names will be mentioned, may be repeated without suspicion of eavesdropping. First, they seized on the reorganization of Bengal, and said it was an infernal thing to

reverse the partition, because in India it is a rule that nothing must be reversed. Then they read again, and said that the reorganization proposed was the one sensible way of administering Bengal, and that, if Curzon had taken the trouble to consult the Civil Service, he would have done this at the beginning. Next they said that, if it had to be done, it had better be done this way than any other; and perhaps, after all, the evil of reversing the partition would be neutralized by the removal of the capital. As to that, they said, one and all, that they had always in their hearts been in favour of it, but that they had never imagined that it could or would be done in their lifetime, and so had never even discussed it. At any rate it was a stroke of daring unequalled in Indian policy. But what would Calcutta say; and what, when he came to realize that he had to pay for

the reunion of Bengal by the loss of the capital, would the Bengali say? Anyhow, it would be "jolly plucky" of the King to go and face it out at Calcutta after making this announcement at Delhi; and there was comfort to the official mind in the thought that the Bengali had to pay.

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How shall the King-Emperor be arrayed so that he may be instantly recognized by his loyal subjects in India and strike their imagination? Manifestly he cannot outshine the potentates of this country. No conceivable confection of cloth of gold, encrusted with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, would enable him to do that. The most opulent imagination could not design a state carriage or a retinue which would eclipse in glory those which have been brought to Delhi by Princes of quite minor States. All solutions have their difficulties. The King in the uniform of a

Field Marshal or Admiral is only one of scores of people in uniform who press closely together at the central group in the processions; and when a helmet is added, recognition becomes complicated. One hears a dozen suggestions—that one elephant should be permitted in the camp and that the King should ride it; that he should wear the robe of the Garter—obviously inhuman under this scorching sun—that he should ride quite alone with the Royal Standard borne behind him, and long intervals in front and behind—which the policemen are supposed to veto. A popular solution has been a tweed suit, with *sola topee* and gilt pugaree. Thus garbed and riding beside the Queen in a simple state landau, with four horses and outriders and Indian servants behind, holding a gold parasol and what appears to be a large gilt fan, he is universally recognized and acclaimed. I have been among a crowd of Indians on the polo ground this

afternoon, and seen them dance with delight at the appearance of the King and Queen in this equipage ; and whoever invented it deserves a spécial decoration.

This question of costume is by no means so trivial as might be supposed. At least a million and a half of people from all parts of India have been in and out of Delhi city and the Coronation Camp this week, and all of them want to be able to go back to their towns or villages and say that they have seen the King. Whether they will cheer or not when he passes is a thing which no one can predict. Sometimes they do, sometimes they do not ; but if they do not, nothing can be inferred from their silence. According to the ideas of some of them, it would be gross disrespect to make any noise while the King is passing. I stood the other day among a group of them and saw the King pass almost in silence. Then a strange thing happened. As soon as he had gone, they began shaking

hands, congratulating each other with obvious delight at having done what they had come out to do—namely, *see* the King. If you walk about this camp, you will see dense throngs of people, among whom are thousands of little children, decked out in their best—which is very fine indeed—all anxiously waiting to see the King, and running from point to point at any rumour of his coming. Most of the shows are for the great people, at the best a very small number. But the main object of the Durbar is that this great multitude which is coming into Delhi shall have the simple pleasure that they desire, and that, when they go back to their towns or villages, they shall be able to hold their heads a little higher, because they have seen the King. On the day of the State entry there was some disappointment among the people of Delhi because, to their eyes—and I must add to the eyes of many Europeans—the King was indistin-

guishable from the uniformed throng which surrounded him. My friends, who know the countryfolk, tell me that, whatever they may do to the officials, they never lie to each other. They will not solve the question, as a conscienceless European would, and go home and say that they had seen the King, unless they were quite certain in their own minds that they had seen him. So the point is of real importance, and the King and Queen have shown indefatigable energy and goodnature in meeting it.

. . . . .

Our bearers went out to see the King yesterday and returned saying that they had "seen their God." The reception of the King-Emperor exceeds all the expectations of the official world and has no analogy in Western experience. One sees it as an uprush from the sub-conscious mind of India, the desire for a sovereign, slumbering for centuries, but awakened to life by this event.

Malcontents and critics are swept into line by it and give to the King-Emperor what they deny to his Government. For in his person India becomes one people under one lord and exalts itself, while it deifies the King. The impulse is universal, and the people seem to be celebrating not a Royal visit but a Restoration, or the recovery of some ancient and long-lost symbol of religion. The thing pulls you up short if you have thought about the masses of India in terms of Western democracy; clearly these people are not parliamentarians or constitutionalists. Six weeks ago I heard people arguing apprehensively that the King's visit must be a failure, because he could give no largess and issue no proclamation which would be in keeping with the Eastern idea of monarchy. I feel convinced, after looking on at this scene, that it would have mattered not a straw if he had had no boons to offer and issued no proclamation. There would still



have been the same mystical enthusiasm at the return of the King-Emperor. The King has filled his difficult rôle with equal dignity and affability, but while he is in India he can do no wrong. The Raj looks on and is pleased, but a little puzzled. It wonders how it can rise to the occasion, turn this sentiment to practical account, and avoid the possible reactions when the presence is withdrawn.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TWO CAPITALS

Laying the foundation-stone—The sanctity of the Ridge—Problems to be solved—At Simla—The great mountains

#### I. THE WINTER CAPITAL

**A**T Delhi, on the morning of December 15th, the King laid the foundation-stone of the new capital of India. The position chosen was under the Ridge, a little to the south-west of the Flagstaff Tower, and two miles or more from the Indian city of Delhi. The pulse of an Englishman beats a little quicker as he recalls the associations of this spot, and thinks of the heroic little force which fifty-

five years ago was desperately holding its ground against the multitude of mutineers, just where the King performed this ceremony. I have heard it suggested that the Viceregal Lodge and the Government offices should be built on the Ridge, which would certainly give them a commanding position ; but mercifully this idea has been rejected. The Ridge is sacred ground, and it should be dominated by nothing except the old Mosque, the Flagstaff Tower, and Hindu Rao's house, which still stand to mark the position of the British lines in 1857. I went over the ground with a Mutiny veteran from one of the Coronation camps, and he assured me that it was still exactly as he remembered it in 1857 ; and he was able to point out just where the troops formed up and advanced to meet one of the many sorties from Delhi. By design or good fortune the Ridge has so far been preserved from all builders and

improvers, and I fervently pray that no modern landscape-gardener may be let loose on it with the idea of making it a picturesque background to the new capital. Let it remain exactly as it is, including even the Mutiny memorial, which, though horrible as architecture, has gained associations which no modern monument, however beautiful architecturally, could acquire.

It is doubtful, as I write, whether the laying of the foundation-stone will be more than a symbolic act, for the Durbar site, with its dead level and swampy subsoil, presents extraordinary difficulties to the engineer. But if the north is barred, so also, to a large extent, is the south, which is strewn with the tombs of kings, courtiers, and sages, and with the vast deserted fortresses and walled cities left by the vanished dynasties that preceded the Mogul Empire. Unless it be the Roman Campagna, there is no region in the world

which gives you the same sense of departed glory as the eleven miles from Delhi to the Kutab Minar, that strange and impressive monument of gigantesque architecture. For many practical and some sentimental reasons the new capital must not get entangled in these ancient ruins, but there are said to be other quite eligible sites either to the south-west or to the east, near the river.

An ardent sanatarian would find consolation if a clean sweep were made of the crowded, dirty, picturesque streets which comprise the chief part of the present city. Smallpox rages in them, and they are an open invitation to the plague, which is never far off. For its own safety and convenience, if for no higher motive, the Government of India will have to do something to cleanse and sweeten the existing city. Yet one cannot imagine the real life of the place shifted far from the two great buildings, or groups of buildings, which make it a place

of pilgrimage for the devout Mussulman and the traveller from Europe. The exquisite Pearl Mosque and the Palace within the Fort have been described by a thousand pens, and I will only add my tribute and pass on. Beautiful as they are, they are equalled or surpassed by others in India, and on the whole the Agra Fort is the greater glory. But the Great Mosque, the Jamma Masjid, of Delhi stands supreme among buildings of its kind in the world, and I know of none which in the same degree combines grace and delicacy of outline with grand and massive simplicity of structure. At Agra I had come to think of Shah Jahan as slightly effeminate, but whoever built the vast stone platform of this mosque and crowned it with these lovely minarets and domes had something strong and deep, as well as tender and sensitive, in his heart. The builders of the new Delhi may be thankful that they are

not called upon to do their work within challenging distance of this noble building. But their problem is at the best no easy one. If the English architect in India had deliberately set himself to illustrate the dismal qualities of the civilization we are attempting to impose upon the natives of this country, he could hardly have improved upon his present achievements, so far, at all events, as public buildings are concerned. With few exceptions their incongruity with their surroundings could scarcely go further. The architect who has spent his life in India and developed a style which is fitted to the climate and the country is yet to seek. There are three solutions of the problem. The first is to adapt the native style to modern conditions, as has been done with very considerable success in the new museum at Jeypore and several of the Maharajahs' modern palaces. The second is simply to import the White-

hall type of architecture from England; the third to revert to the old colonial type of big colonnades, large and lofty rooms, spacious verandas. On the whole I hope the last solution will be adopted. One cannot fancy the Government of India housing itself in Maharajahs' palaces; it needs to be British, and to make no pretence about it. The Whitehall type is a purely London production, which would be out of place in this country. This, however, is a matter on which it would be foolish to dogmatize; one can only plead for careful consideration betimes, lest a great opportunity be lost. •

## II. THE SUMMER CAPITAL

My original plan was to go from Delhi to Lahore, and thence to Peshawur; but it occurred to me that Simla was within fourteen hours of Delhi, a mere trifle as distances go in this country. So I have



made a few days' detour to get a glimpse of the Himalayas and of the seat of government during the summer months. My Anglo-Indian 'friends earnestly dissuaded me from this enterprise. They said that nobody went to Simla in the winter, that I should find the hotels closed, the place empty and cheerless, and perhaps be turned back halfway by a snow-blizzard. Particularly they laid stress on the fact that the great things to see—the Government offices, the Viceregal Lodge, and the haunts of fashion—would all be shut down or going at quarter-speed, and that I could not possibly take away with me any impression worth recording of the gay and glittering city in the hills.

Well, certainly, Mrs. Hawksbee is not here, and the high officials are all on the plains, and the most fashionable thoroughfare looks like Whitstable out of season. But the mountains are here and the weather

is radiant, and I cannot imagine a more enchanting and wonderful place. Custom, I suppose, has so staled it for the hard-working official that he has come to regard it mainly as a convenient refuge for Government in hot weather. For myself, I cannot imagine how anyone can do any work in this distractingly beautiful place. It has the advantage of all mountain places I have known, of being on a ridge which gives you views in all directions. Only to the east is the prospect blocked by the conical hill called Jakko, where the monkeys swarm; and a six-mile walk will turn that and bring you in sight of an immense snow range, of which the highest peak runs up to 25,000 feet. Up at Mashobra or Mahatsu—a pleasant walk or ride of ten miles along the Tibet road—you get a still more glorious view of the great snows. North, south, and east the eye ranges over a vast amphitheatre of great mountains and

deep-cut ravines, densely wooded where they get a little water and enough sun, a glowing red solitude where they get no water or too much sun. The immensity of it is a thing you only gradually take in, and an eye used to judge heights by the Swiss snowline is deceived at first. At Simla we are 7,000 feet up, but the deciduous trees go far up the mountains above us, and there are roses in the gardens at Christmas-time. The vast upland which closes the horizon towards the plains is at least 12,000 feet high, but as yet there is not a vestige of snow on it. We are far from the great peaks—Everest and Kinchinjanga—which are seen from Darjeeling, but the whole of the Himalayas seem built to a scale in which the average high peaks will be 20,000 feet and upwards. The valleys are enormously wide, and the mountain ramparts are piled one behind the other over an immense space of country, till you

reach the heart and centre of the range where the great mountains are.

Simla itself is the oddest place one could see in a dream. It clings desperately on to a precipice, and, as you look up to it, it has a superficial resemblance to the photographs of Lhasa. With the exception of one or two Government buildings and residences of high officials, it seems to be made of cardboard and tin, which may be a better way of keeping out the weather than would appear at first sight ; but the tin—or, to be accurate, the corrugated iron—roofs universally in use are certainly not beautiful. There are nevertheless a multitude of most enviable bungalow villas nestling among the deodars, and no place in the world can be so well provided with excellent dry paths to walk on. By the ordinance of an arbitrary and despotic Government all carriages and motor-cars are barred here, except those of the Viceroy

and Commander-in-Chief. All the world else goes in rickshaws—a detestable mode of conveyance which a man of spirit abandons quickly for his legs or a pony. The result is admirable, and it is peace and refreshment to the soul to be in a country where there are excellent roads winding through forests, with magnificent mountain views at every turn, and neither carriages nor motors to dispute the way with you. All the same, I repeat my astonishment that the Government of India is able to do any work at all in this enchanting spot, or that the Viceroy has any thoughts save for the incomparable prospect from his Lodge.

## CHAPTER VII

### ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

From Lahore northwards—A glimpse of Kashmir—  
The valley of Peshawur—A typical incident—The  
administrator's problem—Surmises about the Ameer

**G**OING northward from Lahore you quickly leave behind you the pleasant greenery in which that city is built, and pass out into the gréat plain of the Punjaub. For miles it stretches almost flat to the horizon, but the brown levels are varied with patches of spring wheat and clumps of trees surrounding the mud-walled villages. The Grand Trunk Road, which is still the highway into India from Afghanistan and Central Asia, keeps steadily to the left of

the line, and now and then you may see caravans of the shaggy Afghan camels passing down it. After two hours or so you begin to rise, and then for two hours more you travel through a desolate region of caked mud carved into miniature cañons by the summer rains. Now, keep a look-out to the right, and you will begin to see the low spurs of the Kashmir mountains, which gradually get higher and nearer till they open out into a vast semicircle of clear-cut jagged peaks, with the high snows behind them, enclosing the horizon to the north and east. Of all the fleeting visions from railway carriage windows which I have stored up in my mind, I shall always remember the view across the plain to these mountains from the Chenab Bridge as one of the most delectable. The mountains are a dazzling blue, and they rise sheer out of the plain, through which the river sweeps in broad curves between

sandy banks. From this point onwards to Peshawur you never leave the mountains, and the train travels northward through a succession of broad flat valleys, each enclosed by a circle of rocky and mostly barren mountains. About four in the afternoon we reach Rawal Pindi, the principal military station in India under the Kitchener scheme, and a pleasant enough place to be quartered in, if one may judge from a passing glimpse; but unfortunately it had become dark before we came to Attock Bridge and the famous gorge of the Indus. Happily, we saw it in full daylight on the way back, and of its kind there can be no more beautiful scene in the world.

It is commonly said by all travellers who come to Peshawur that there you are out of India and into Central Asia. I cannot pretend to any experience which enables me to make that subtle distinction.



The landscape looks to my eye more familiar than the ordinary Indian scene. The city is raised on an eminence in the centre of a broad flat valley, which is richly wooded and cultivated, and, when spring comes, will be the floweriest spot in all this land. There are roses and violets in the gardens now, and every road is a shady avenue. Except for one gap to the south, it is completely encircled by mountains, which, like all the mountains in this country, rise steeply and suddenly from the edge of the plain. In form and outline the Peshawur country greatly resembles one of the broad flat valleys of the Trentino, or any other southern slope of the Tyrol above Verona; and, seen from a distance, the city itself is by no means unlike an Italian hill-town. Look down on it from the roof of the big gate to the south of the city, and it seems a smiling, prosperous country, where men should make money,

grow fat, and live peacefully. Indeed, the great alluvial plain between the city and the mountains on the north is reported to be the richest land in all India, and is famous for its rice and sugar-cane.

This sleek illusion of peace and a quiet life is soon dispelled. The morning of our arrival an official shows me his reports for the previous evening. A certain brigand, by no means of the first class, has come down with his following during the night and raided a village not two miles from Government House, his object being the purely burglarious one of looting the house of a certain resident, reputed wealthy. The resident defends himself stoutly, and is loyally backed by the villagers, who after a brisk fight, lasting for several hours, beat off the attack. The Assistant-Commissioner, who reports on the matter, praises them warmly, and suggests that they be rewarded by a small remission of revenue.

None the less, Abdul Mohammed, the rich man, and his servant, Mustapha, are lying dead with their throats cut, and several of the villagers are wounded, and the robbers have got away to the hills with the plunder. The official sighs, for he has the tiresome business of scenting out this gang; but it is, he explains, an everyday incident, merely an affair of police and by no means to be dignified with the name of a "raid." The day after my arrival I went, accompanied by a friend, new to this country like myself, on foot through the city of Peshawur, a place of endless fascination to a man fresh from Europe. On returning I was severely taken to task for my imprudence. It was explained to me that while my personal survival or non-survival might be a matter of indifference to the Government of India, the disappearance of two Englishmen, or an attack on them by a fanatic, would be an annoying

incident to the Administration, and be necessarily followed by the infliction of severe fines on probably innocent people. You may walk in Peshawur for thirty days in the month and nothing happen, but there are several thousand men there who would think it no sin, if not a positively meritorious act, to cut your throat for a ten-rupee note; and there are thousands more who are quick to take offence at fancied slights to their religion or dignity. And all these go armed with daggers or knives, concealed under the coat between the arm-pits.

Peshawur, then, you soon discover, is a very different place from the ordinary Indian city, where you may walk in the bazaars and be as safe as in the Whitechapel Road. No one, as one of my official friends says, "knows who may be in the city." Among its eighty thousand inhabitants is a large floating population which drifts down the

Khyber from Afghanistan and Central Asia ; and hunted men from the surrounding country use it as a temporary city of refuge against hereditary enemies, who will have their blood if they are caught in the open. Some of the immigrants have quite legitimate employments, such as bringing the Afghan camels to market or seeking work as navvies in Northern India ; others have a price on their heads, and occupations which must be veiled from the police. The line between what a Western would call the criminal and the law-abiding classes is thin and wavering, and in an inordinate number of cases killing is no murder. The man who does not avenge his own honour, especially where a woman is concerned, is a leper and an outcast, and may as well be hanged for killing his enemy as go mad and commit suicide under the rigour of the boycott. Through it all there runs a strain of political intrigue. Under the guise of a separate

Post Office, which claims extra-territorial rights, the Ameer is suspected of maintaining a political agency, which both keeps an eye on refugees from across the border and informs him of what is being said and done among the Feringhi. The Postmaster has even had the audacity to seize and intern certain of his fellow-countrymen, who, I am glad to say, were promptly released by the fiat of the Chief Commissioner. Soldiers and civilians may be heard to grumble at the tolerance of this anomaly by the Government of India, which enjoys no similar privilege in the forbidden territory of Afghanistan. But high policy overrides logic and the convenience of administrators, and if there is one thing on which London and Calcutta have been agreed in recent years, it is that the Afghan hornet's nest must not be stirred.

Wisely, I think, when all the possibilities, near and remote, are borne in mind ; but,

none the less, the administrative problem here is one of the most difficult in the world, and it is impossible to admire too much the skill, patience, and adroitness with which it is handled by the present Chief Commissioner, Sir George Roos-Keppel, and his staff. By all logic the situation is an impossible one. The administrator here has to deal with two boundaries, and beyond the second is a neighbour of doubtful intentions who must on no account be disturbed, though he may always set forces in motion which may disturb you. British law runs to the edge of this plain; then beyond it up the mountains to the Durand boundary, which is roughly the watershed between this country and Afghanistan, is a region where no law runs, or only such laws as can be enforced by punitive expeditions. Here is the home of the Afridis, and the numerous clans of that tribe, Zakka Khels and other Khels, which have troubled the

peace of this border for generations past. They are fine, virile, gentlemanly freebooters, who conduct their sport of raiding and man-hunting according to strict rules of honour and chivalry, and bear you no malice if you shoot or hang them when you have succeeded in catching them. That is merely bad luck, and no reflection on you or them. One of the whimsical facts about this country is that the police who keep the border are all recruited from these people themselves, and that no exasperation follows between the poachers turned gamekeepers and their former associates. Except that there is real killing, in which many a brave Britisher has been laid low, it might be a high-spirited, good-natured game carried on by gentlemen of leisure who find the settled life too boring.

But unfortunately the tolerant spirit which regards it thus is becoming antiquated even in this region. Rich Mohammedan gentle-



men dislike being raided and killed, and look to the Government to protect them. Hindu money-lenders and merchants like it even less, being a despised class who have never been admitted to the privileges of the Robber Barony. But before you can get the police in motion, your raider is over the administrative border into the no-man's land, or, still worse, into the Khost Valley, which, for a special complication of this perplexed problem, is a wedge of Afghan territory running down into the no-man's land. This valley becomes the base of operations for British outlaws to raid back into British territory ; and there is no sure way of dealing with them which may not make trouble with the Ameer. The disposition of that potentate is a dark and intricate subject on which the experts differ. A few say that he foments the trouble and supplies the tribes with rifles and money. More believe that he "would be friendly, if he could, but that

he has neither the character nor the power to control the fanatics who incite the tribes. News from Kabul is mere gossip, and slippery stuff at that. The few Europeans who go there, mechanics, chauffeurs, etc., are to all intents kept prisoners while they are in Afghan territory, and have nothing of importance to tell when they come out. It is for practical purposes a sealed country, and that it should remain so is for the great convenience of both its European neighbours. The Government of India, however, has lately found a very effective way of dealing with the Ameer. When the trouble gets too bad and Afghan incitement is reasonably suspected, it threatens to close the passes from Afghanistan into India, a measure which would bar the winter migration of the tens of thousands of Ghilzais and other Afghan tribes who practically earn their living for the year by work in Northern India. Turned back from the frontier, these

formidable fellows would betake themselves for explanations to Kabul, where most certainly their presence is not desired. A hint that the passes might be closed proved magical last winter, and the key to a large part of this problem may be found in the fact that, while we do not desire to go into Afghanistan, a great many thousands of Afghans do every year most ardently desire to come out of it.

This slight sketch of the suburbs and surroundings of Peshawur may help the reader to realize what my official friend means when he says that "no one knows who may be in the city." It is none the less—or perhaps for that very reason—a very wonderful place. If you asked M. Dulac, or some other designer of Eastern subjects, to make you a picture to illustrate the "Arabian Nights," he would draw you just such a scene as you may see from the southern gate of the city,—a tangle of square roofs, high and low,

set at irregular angles, with all manner of queer tackle on top, mottled with dark, sharp shadows, and here and there the white minarets of the mosques rising vividly against a background of pale blue mountains. Except in one quarter, where some modern hand has been at work with white and yellow wash, it is all the pale brown of baked Indian mud, with occasionally a touch of red where a stiffening of brick has been introduced. The material looks flimsy, yet it stands well against rainstorm and earthquake, and there are narrow streets in which the houses rise to seven or eight stories of richly carved wooden fronts, and all but meet overhead. Except that the bottom is dry, walking in these is like being in a very narrow side-canal in Venice, with a smell to match. Walking anywhere is a perpetual jostling, and, if you stop to buy, you are surrounded by a crowd which watches your efforts to bargain in an unknown tongue with a lively

curiosity that easily develops into partisanship. There are scarcely any women about, for in Peshawur a good wife is content with such sun and air as she can get from the roof of her house, and would think it no compliment to be allowed to walk abroad, since that is the privilege of the old and plain. But the children swarm everywhere, and in no European city would you see so many gay, swaggering, handsome young men as you will meet in a morning's walk through Peshawur. The scene on a sunny morning is incomparably vivid, and you may spend hours in vainly trying to decipher its meaning.

From the southern gate you see a slight depression in the blue mountains to the west, and beyond it a long line of snow. The depression is the Khyber, and the snow is on the mountains of Afghanistan. One of the thrills of Indian travel is to realize suddenly that behind these hills

lies the city of Kabul and the valley in which, if India were ever again invaded from the north, its fate would probably be decided.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OVER THE KHYBER TO LUNDI KOTAL

Up the Pass from Jamrud—The violation of Tuesday  
—A Khyber caravan—The “prickly hedge” and life  
within it—The Zakkakhels and their holy man

THE Khyber Road takes you out of Peshawur through an avenue of Nim and Kika trees, and then runs for seven miles straight across a stony plain to Jamrud, which lies at the foot of the mountains and marks the administrative boundary of British India. Jamrud is a fort, and resembles nothing in the world so much as a stranded Dreadnought, its bastions roughly corresponding to the turrets, and its barracks and chimneys to the upper deck and funnels of a modern battleship. To the left, across the

road, is a serai, or walled enclosure, in which a belated caravan may spend the night, and just under the fort, on the right, a large pond, where, as we come up, some scores of camels, mules, and ponies are watering before the last stage of their journey into Peshawur. From Jamrud the road ascends quickly, and is soon zigzagging up a rocky gorge, whence it emerges six hundred feet higher into a frowning black and brown valley. Look up, and you will see blockhouses at short intervals on spurs of the hills to right and left, with pickets on guard outside each, who, if they recognize your car for an official one, will present arms as you pass. Only on Tuesdays and Fridays is the road open and this essential provision made to avert temptation from the freebooters who swarm on these hills. As we go up, my companion describes to me how he was shot at on a Tuesday at Ali Masjid not a year from now, and the black iniquity of that act still rankles in his mind.



Excusable, of course, on any other day of the week, but smelling to heaven on a Tuesday! It is still a Tuesday, and the sight of the pickets is reassuring, but that outrageous romantic incident will not bear repetition, and we reach Ali Masjid with no worse excitement than the quite pleasurable one of taking the curves of the road at a swinging pace in an extremely comfortable high-power motor-car.

From a little above Ali Masjid to the foot of the pass the road is doubled, and going up on the higher road you see the camel caravans descending by the lower. A camel caravan is like a goods train on legs. And such legs! For sense of power and endurance I know nothing in the animal world which quite equals the Afghan camel. He is to the trotting camel or camel of the desert what the Shire horse is to the race-horse or park hack. As tall as the tallest trotting camel, he has enormous thighs and

fetlocks, and a shaggy coat which hangs in great bunches from his neck. He will carry on his back, without any apparent effort, the contents of a fair-sized wagon and one or two passengers as well. He walks with a great stride, but sets his own pace, and will not be hustled. A caravan may be anything from fifty to a thousand camels, and with it will go ponies, donkeys, mules, and a crowd of walkers, some in charge of the beasts, but others merely on the tramp from Afghanistan into India, who join up for the sake of company and safety. Among them are a few women and a considerable number of children, who seem to enter into the spirit of the thing and take it as a gay adventure. Nearly all the men are armed, some with Lee-Metfords, the rest with old-pattern rifles slung over their shoulders. Going down, the beasts are laden with great bales, containing mostly carpets and rugs from Kabul, silks and velvets from Bokhara, and

the numerous other textiles, tissues, and woven fabrics which come into the bazaars of India from Central Asia, together with spices, oils, dates, and many queer things that the Indians count as delicacies. Going up, they take Manchester cottons, English and German hardware, pottery, china, furniture, and great masses of the miscellaneous cheap goods from Europe which attract the Oriental taste. One camel I noticed seemed to be entirely laden with cuckoo clocks, another had gilt mirrors, a third great bundles of English spades, a fourth big crates of objects which looked like cheap ornaments for Christmas-trees. One might spend days on the pass simply watching these caravans and still find their interest inexhaustible. My companion points out to me the Kabulis, the Ghilzais, and other tribes of Afghans; he knows the men from Bokhara and the men from Turkestan, and can say why some are quite white and have

blue eyes and others have black hair and olive complexions, while others again are all brown and chocolate. I get the general impression that these men of the road are a splendid people, who hold themselves erect, look you straight in the eye, and walk with a fine proud, swinging gait. Our car brings temporary confusion to more than one caravan, and there is a wild stampede of ponies to the side of the road as we approach. The drivers take it with perfect courtesy and good-humour, and set themselves to push the great camels aside to make room for us. Pushing a camel is apparently the only means of altering its course, and when several hundred have to be pushed it requires an enormous aggregate effort on the part of the drivers. To be seated in a car entirely enveloped in a Khyber caravan is to enjoy one of the most delightful moments of Eastern travel.

The traveller for curiosity is usually

turned back at Ali Masjid, but our party had the good fortune to be permitted to go on to Lundi Kotal, the head-quarters of the Khyber Rifles, at the highest point of the pass. The fifteen miles between Ali Masjid and Lundi Kotal let you into the real secret of the Indian frontier. Here at length you see from within that "prickly hedge," as Lord Rosebery called it, which we are wise enough or cynical enough to let grow in its own way between us and Afghanistan. It is but one valley among many inhabited by the Afridi tribes, and life is much the same in all of them along the circle from the Malakand in the North to the Kurram Valley in the South. You would have thought that the problem of squeezing a bare living out of the little pockets of soil, on which alone things can be grown or beasts fed in this desolate region, would have absorbed all the energies of the tribes that live in it. But

if they had deliberately organized their life with the object of aggravating that problem to the utmost, they could hardly have done better—or worse. Six miles from Ali Masjid you come to a great desolate flat valley surrounded by stony mountains. There, if anywhere, you would say, men must huddle together for comfort and company and make the best of their stony existence. And there, sure enough, you see a new type of village, which at first sight seems admirably adapted to the common life. It is a large, oblong compound, enclosed by a substantial, carefully finished mud wall about 8 feet high, with a watch-tower about 20 feet high at one corner. There is room within for some forty or fifty men, women, and children, living comfortably as comfort is reckoned in this region. The walls keep out the jackal and leopard, and make the goats and poultry safe. It seems a sensible enough

arrangement, and you may count half a dozen of these compounds in this one valley. But inquire again and you will learn that every one of these compounds is almost certainly at deadly war with every other, and that the watch-tower at the corner is merely a point of vantage from which every village snipes every other or any stray individual, not of its own faction, who is rash enough to expose himself in the open, without friends to cover him with loaded rifles, while he attempts to do a little perilous work in the fields.

We talk about the complications of the civilized state, but they are as nothing to the complexities of this barbarism. We have here the Corsican vendetta, not in isolated cases, but as the basis of society and the accepted substitute for law and economic competition. In these villages of the Zakkakhels and other Khels of the

Afridi tribes, you live in a network of hostile relations which it is your first duty in life to pursue. Some one in the next compound killed your grandfather; your father killed him, and was himself killed by his son. You have to kill that son, and some one will all the time be trying to kill you on account of another hereditary feud on the maternal side of the family. This is a comparatively simple case, for there are other feuds the origin of which is clean forgotten, but which are handed on by tradition from one generation to the next. The result is that the head-man tends to gather round him in each of these mud fortresses those of his own blood with whom he has no feud, and who are pledged to take up his quarrels and avenge him if he falls. His security and that of his clan depends on the number of those who are thus pledged to act together, and the fear which they can instil. Every



village is always on guard, and a marksman will sit for hours together in one of those little towers on the chance of catching an enemy in the open. Since the space between two villages is liable to be swept by fire, agriculture is confined to the outer spaces under cover of the walls. Where the feud is specially violent, boys have to be confined to the compounds until they are of age to carry a rifle, for they may be shot without mercy, on the principle of reducing the number of males in the enemy's camp; and even girls have to be carefully guarded, lest they should be kidnapped and held to ransom. At sundown the whole population withdraws into the shelter of the compounds, and I am told that if you travelled by night, and lay up by day, you could probably go from end to end of the frontier without seeing a human face. The road itself is the only recognized sanctuary in the whole region. Whoever

kills on the road or within fifty yards on either side of the road is amenable to British justice, which may award him twelve months' hard labour for the exploit. Look carefully as you approach Lundi Kotal, and you will see long straight trenches cut from the villages to the road. This is to enable the villagers to reach the sanctuary without exposing themselves in the open.

There are signs, I am told, that some of the older men are beginning to tire of this life and would welcome any way of getting rid of it which saved their honour. One might suppose that the women would interfere to stop it for the sake of the children, but opinion is agreed that quarrels about women are the principal cause of the feuds, and that the women are remorseless in holding their husbands and sons to the peculiar code of chivalry which holds in this region. I suspect that the traffic in arms by way of the Persian

Gulf, which is yearly making these tribes more formidable, will in time react on their domestic habits. A vendetta pursued with knives or old-fashioned muzzle-loading rifles leaves you a fair chance of survival, but with Lee-Enfields or Martini-Henrys the odds against you are too heavy. Gradually, one may hope, this "new fact" will make itself felt, and in the meantime it is something that these wild men will cheerfully take service in the Khyber Rifles, and bury their feuds while on duty, though apparently they return straight to the old life when they go on leave. It is an understood thing between officers and men that when the latter ask for leave they ask for it on a different date and for a different destination from that which they will actually take—this for fear that they should be betrayed and stalked by some enemy in the camp. Only yesterday a Zakkakhel orderly came to a friend of mine with a sad story. His two

children, a boy and girl, had been kidnapped by an enemy, and he begged for leave to go and ransom them. He also asked for the loan of a sum of money to pay the ransom. This, however, he said, was quite secure ; for he was a man of great patience and resource, and he had no doubt whatever that, if he devoted himself seriously to the task, when on leave during the next six months, he would be able to capture a woman, whom he could hold to ransom for a sum which would repay his outlay with interest and give him a little in addition. There was also, he hinted, an element of insult in the proceeding which might have to be dealt with in another way, but that would not conflict with the business side of the transaction.

Such is life as lived in the "prickly hedge," and after looking at it for a fortnight at close quarters, I agree with Lord Rosebery that the worst use to which we

could put it would be to sit on it. The subjugation of these wild valleys would no doubt be a possible enterprise, but now that the tribes have got themselves armed with modern rifles it would be considerably more difficult than, say, twenty years ago ; and the task of administering them according to British ideas of law and justice would be expensive and difficult. However remorselessly they may war with each other, they will undoubtedly unite in defence of what they are firmly convinced is the one and only free, independent and democratic mode of existence. Moreover, if we advanced our administrative boundary to the Durand line we should immediately become responsible for keeping the peace between the tribes and Afghanistan, into which, as occasionally into British territory, they are in the habit of raiding, when the pinch of hunger becomes too severe. There are other grave objections to pushing forward to

the Durand boundary, if we can avoid doing so, not the least being the unrest which would follow among the Afghans. The advocates of the forward policy tell you, of course, that they would stop at the Afghan frontier, but it is well known at Kabul that British strategists consider the "real frontier" of India to be the Hindu-Kush, and any further advance would be construed by the Ameer (and probably by Russia) as the first stage on a journey with Kabul for its destination.

I have left the reader somewhere on top of the pass by Lundi Kotal while I have made this wide digression. We have been most hospitably entertained by the officers in the Fort, and I have wandered with a companion up the mountain-side to get a glimpse of the forbidden country across the frontier. An armed escort is with us, and when we lose them for a moment on descending into a dip, they come after us

at the double. It is four o'clock, and we are warned to start back, for it is a good thirty miles to Peshawur, and the sun sets at half-past five. With the sunset ahead of us the desolate valleys are transfigured, and the plain below is a vision of pure gold. One last impression of the Zakkakhels I have imprinted on my mind. At a certain turn of the road before you reach Ali Masjid, going downwards, is a mound of earth, on which many poles with rags attached to them are planted. This is the much venerated tomb of a very holy man. Its origin is recent and historical. A few years ago the Zakkakhels had no holy man's tomb, and for that reason were much derided by the Kukikhels, who had two. This greatly tried their endurance, so they waited by the roadside until one day there came along an ancient and famous sage, of great sanctity, making the journey from Kabul to Lahore. Him they took and

cut his throat, and planted out under this mound, to which all the tribe bring offerings to this day, so that the Kukikhels laugh no more. When not killing each other, and even when killing each other, these people have by all accounts a very pleasant humour, and I have frequently heard them called the Irish of India.



## CHAPTER IX

### POLITICS AND REFORM

The year of unrest—Success of the Legislative Councils — The intellectual effort of governing India — Religious movements among Hindus—Two serious questions

SO far I have confined myself to describing the Indian scene with as little expression of opinion as possible about Indian politics. But without departing from the scheme of these chapters, or posing in the least as an authority on Indian affairs, I may here add a few impressions about the position of the Government and its general relations with the people of India.

The year 1907 is universally spoken of as the black year of Indian unrest, and there is

general agreement that the symptoms have been sensibly eased from that time onward. I say "symptoms" advisedly, for there is a difference of opinion as to whether the disease is mending or has merely been driven below the surface. There are pessimists who take the latter view, and I have heard a member of the Criminal Investigation Department express the gloomiest misgivings as to the near future ; but the more general opinion is that there is a real improvement. It would warm Lord Morley's heart to hear the tributes which are paid to his courage and sagacity both by the abler men in the Civil Service and by influential Indians. I had long talks with a group of the latter in the camp at Delhi, and they were unanimous that the Legislative Councils had been a great success. A few extensions and developments will be demanded as time goes on, but the reformers, I was told, were turning from political agitation to economics

and education. On the other hand, you may hear officials saying that the Councils have altered nothing and that the Assistant-Commissioner and the collector continue to have their own way as before. If so, both parties ought to be satisfied ; but, however much useless or irrelevant talk there may be, I can hardly imagine a sensible administrator not being influenced by contact with his Council, even though he may be quite convinced of the superiority of his own judgment. As a matter of fact, there is, so far as an outsider can judge, a fair give-and-take between the official majorities and unofficial minorities on the Councils, which will profoundly, though gradually and insensibly, affect the character of the Government. An Anglo-Indian, who had been a strong opponent of the Morley Reform schemes, told me that after eighteen months' experience of the workings of the Councils he was a complete convert, and that he had never

imagined that there could be so much *camaraderie* and friendly co-operation between officials and Indians as he had seen with his own eyes in the Councils of which he had experience.

There is a rather sharp division of opinion between the old school and the new school of Indian civilians. You will hear very able men, nearing the end of their service, declaring frankly that they have no sympathy with the "new ideas about the natives," and deploring the pressure from a democratic Parliament at home which has driven the Raj out of its true course. It is a maxim with these men that nothing which has once been done by the Government of India should ever be reversed, lest a change of policy should be construed as a concession to agitators; and undoubtedly they regard the reversal of the Partition of Bengal as a deep blot on the year of the Durbar, even while they admit that the new arrangement

is sensible enough on its own merits. Yet, on the whole, administrative India is, I am convinced, relieved to have done with the Bengali grievance. The Government of India, said a very acute observer, has had the Bengali on its nerves for the last ten years, and all that time has flattered and complimented the little group of agitators at Calcutta by the extreme importance which it has attached to their proceedings. The crowning mercy of the move to Delhi is that it will get the Government out of the Bengali *milieu*. Another official expressed the same idea somewhat differently when he said that the Government "looked at things too much through the spectacles of the Criminal Investigation Department." To that department all "agitators" are potentially criminals; to the Government they should all be at least potentially innocent.

• To the traveller in India the surprising

thing is not that there should be unrest, but that there should ever be any rest. When he realizes the vast number of the inhabitants, their differences in race, creed, and language, the high degree of intelligence and the subtlety of mind with which large numbers of them are endowed, he wonders only how it is possible to find governing formulas to suit them all. India may impress him as poor, as squalid, as mediæval, but never for a moment can it strike him as a crude or barbarous country which could be easily governed by force. Evidences meet him everywhere of art, originality, and refinement. He will see more beautiful faces in a morning's walk in an Indian bazaar than in any European city, and he will be charmed by the grace and courtesy of the common folk. It may surprise Englishmen to hear it, but many Indians seriously express the opinion that the Indian is mentally the superior of the Englishman,

while freely conceding that the latter is the more effective and the more practical kind of man. However this may be, one does get the impression in India that to rule these people permanently must be an intellectual and imaginative effort of a high order, for which no police, however vigilant, and no army, however strong, can in the long run be a substitute. Except in Bengal, the more important movements among the Hindus in the near future are likely to take a religious and philosophical rather than a strictly political form. Numerous societies, and chief among them the Arya Somaj, are at work with the professed and, I believe, quite sincere purpose of purifying Hinduism and mitigating the divisions of caste. In all parts of India sages and preachers are making their appearance, who find a ready hearing for a simple doctrine not far removed from that of the Sermon on the Mount. The Govern-

ment of India is worried about these, much as Herod was worried about John the Baptist. It suspects them of being preachers of sedition under the guise of religion ; it scents danger in any movement which threatens to change what it has assumed to be unalterable in the Indian character. And yet I find a general agreement among careful observers that a real revivalist spirit is at work which, if rightly handled, should be a great aid to good government.

For immediate practical purposes two questions, I gather, are likely to have increasing importance. The first is the appointment of Indians to the higher branches of the Civil Service and to equal rank with English officers in the Army. About the Army I am not qualified to express any opinion except that to an outsider a system which permanently relegates the most friendly and influential of the native gentlemen to positions of inferiority



looks like an anomaly which cannot last, if we invite them to take service under the Crown. As to the Civil Service, the young Indian can theoretically enter by the same door as the young Englishman—the door of examination in London. A few who have the means to get educated in England succeed in this and become in the process almost wholly Europeanized. The demand of the Indian politicians is for simultaneous examinations in India which will enable them to dispense with the necessity of going to England. Personally I believe this to be a mistake. If the examinations were, as now, fitted on to the honours schools of Oxford and Cambridge, nothing would be gained by holding them in Calcutta or Delhi. Only an occasional freak student would succeed in passing them without the education that corresponds to them. My Indian friends protest that they do not wish to change the examination or lower the stan-

dard ; they only desire to see "the principle conceded." But the concession of the principle without practical results following would merely lead to a new grievance, and incidentally to charges of bad faith. The solution of this question lies, I think, for all immediate purposes, in the promotion by the Government of Indians who have proved their fitness in the positions that are now open to them. I have talked to administrators of long experience, who tell me that they have in their districts as extra-Assistant Commissioners, or in some other subordinate capacity, native gentlemen of long service and wide knowledge, to whose honesty and sagacity they would implicitly trust. They think it a real hardship that these men should be permanently confined to positions in which they are subordinate to the youngest new-comer from England. The objection commonly made to their promotion is that the English administrators,

Governors, Lieutenant-Governors, Chief Commissioners, and the like, cannot be trusted with the business of patronage. They will select, it is said, not for fitness, but for favouritism, or to conciliate the ruling chiefs and rich native gentlemen. This objection, if good, would cut rather deep. A very large part of the Government's business is, and must be, the exercise of patronage, and if it cannot be trusted with the selection of Indians, how shall it be trusted to choose between Englishmen? If the Government really desires to enlist the best Indians on its side and to persuade them that an honourable career is open to them under British rule, it must somehow solve this question, and the answer that it cannot trust itself will certainly not be accepted as conclusive.

The second question touches the administration of justice. We have been accustomed

to speak in England as if the difficulty of getting a white man convicted for offences against a coloured one was confined to Africa, and I was genuinely surprised to find the Civil Service deeply concerned about it in India. The trouble is with the non-official English juries, consisting of shopkeepers, merchants, clerks, and the like, who try these cases. They will not convict where a capital sentence is possible. They find in face of plain evidence that a native has been killed by "some person or persons unknown," that he had an enlarged spleen or some other disease which would have caused his death in any case. There is, of course, no corresponding leniency shown to the native offender. Here is an extract from one day's criminal record which came under my notice :—

ALLAHABAD, Nov. 23.—L. G., European, aged about sixteen, ticket collector on Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway, was to-day acquitted by High Court jury on

charges of culpable homicide and grievous hurt in connexion with death of his Pathan cook he had kicked, but was found guilty of simple hurt and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

LAHORE, 23.—In Punjab Chief Court, before Justice Rattigan, Corporal C. has been sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs.100 for doing rash act in causing death of a coolie at Simla by pushing him over hill-side near Volunteer Head-quarters. The jury strongly recommended accused to mercy, and Court took also into consideration his past excellent character and the two months he has already been in jail.

BOMBAY, 22.—After three weeks' trial at sessions at Satara before Mr. Clements twenty-one persons, several of them with previous convictions, have been found guilty of theft in railway carriage disguised as Marwar traders, seventeen of them to transportation for life, two to seven years, and two to two years' imprisonment. One man was acquitted.

About these cases I know nothing except what is here set down, and I do not wish to express any opinion on their merits. But the frequency of the contrast of which this is an example is beyond all question

doing great mischief in India as in Africa ; and it is becoming a serious question whether trial by jury should not be abolished for cases of this kind. Lord Curzon bravely risked unpopularity by insisting, in season and out of season, on a high standard of conduct as between English and Indians, and it is to be hoped that other Viceroys will see to it that there is no slipping back. We have to deal in India with a group of highly intelligent men, who are both sensitive and vigilant on this subject, and who resent as an indignity to their race the much too common assumption that the Indian has not the same feelings and does not merit the same treatment as the European. I may add here that the treatment of Indians in British Colonies is another serious grievance which leaves the Englishman in India utterly at a loss for excuse or apology. It would be difficult to

exaggerate the gravity of the blow thus dealt at the theory of British citizenship which every right-minded administrator endeavours to uphold in this country. .

## CHAPTER X

### CANTONMENT AND CITY

A salient contrast and its meaning—The “miracle” of British rule—An Indian opinion—Bridging the gap and its consequences—The demand of young India—The problem for the cantonment

THE most salient contrast in India is that between cantonment and city. The cantonment is the little world which the Englishman has made for himself outside the walls of the native city. With its broad avenues, spacious bungalows and big gardens, it is generally a very pleasant place, and within it all the apparatus of English life is faithfully set up, with special stress on the sporting side. The polo ground, the cricket ground,



the golf course, the church, and the club are invariable features, and society passes from one to the other by a routine which goes by clockwork. Nowhere as in India do you get such a sense of fixed hours for work and play. It is the habit to grumble at the native gardener, but under English supervision he produces charming results. Even in the dead of winter the cantonments of Northern India are gay with *Bougainvillæa* and jasmine, and, when spring comes, some of them will be buried in roses. With a multitude of servants, horses, motor-cars, smart carriages and dogcarts, life, to all outward seeming, goes smoothly and easily. There are, of course, the Indian plagues : dust, insects, and a variety of obstacles to housekeeping and cleanliness, of which every Anglo-Indian lady complains. The sun must not be trifled with even in winter, and walking is said to be impossible (except to the

golfer), but every other form of physical exercise is found practicable. You have plain evidence before you that a vast deal of hard work is done, for it is impossible to administer millions of people without hard work; but there is a general disinclination to talk about it, and, unless you take pains to dig below the surface, the cantonment will give you the impression that its whole life is within its own boundaries, and that its main interest is its polo, its golf, its dances, and its dinner-parties.

A mile distant, divided by a dusty brown waste, lies the city, enclosed by its ancient wall and to all outward seeming as jealously guarded against intrusion or attack as the cantonment is open and defenceless. Its inhabitants live packed in tiny houses which seem only arrested in the act of falling by the happy accident of having met others that were falling in the opposite direction. It is a maze of

narrow streets and tortuous lanes, crowded at all hours of the day by a vivid, chattering stream of richly coloured humanity. The cantonment, with its two thousand Europeans, spreads out over a space of two square miles; the city contains 60,000 Mohammedans and Hindus within a single square mile. To the tourist with eyes in his head, the city is an endless fascination, but he may walk for hours in it without seeing an English face. The city possesses itself and the cantonment possesses itself, and a hundred years of rule by the cantonment has not visibly affected the city.

I am saying nothing new ; this apparently ineffaceable line between East and West and the complete externality of the two systems to each other have struck every traveller who goes to India for the first time.<sup>1</sup> Until you go to India, you think of the two systems penetrating each other and

<sup>1</sup> See especially W. H. Russell, *My Diary in India*.

reacting on each other, and something of this is visible in the big cities, like Bombay, where the Indian gentlemen are growing rich and beginning to live the European life. But in the greater part of India it is brought home to you that East and West lie side by side without touching each other, and that not for generations, if ever, will contact be established. There is, if one may believe the older Anglo-Indians, rather less coming and going between the cantonment and the city than thirty years ago, when the civilian was glibber at the languages and more human, if also more autocratic, in his dealings with the natives. Now the fashion is to say that the chasm can never be bridged, and that much trouble has come from foolish, if well-intentioned, efforts to build a bridge.

If we can get a little closer to this question we shall be near the heart of the British-Indian problem. A few weeks in India

gives me no title to dogmatize on an aspect of Indian life which is a puzzle to the oldest resident, yet certain impressions gleaned from many talks with Indians as well as Englishmen may be set down for what they are worth. I have just been reading to a very intelligent young Indian gentleman a passage from an essay by Meredith Townsend in which the rule of Great Britain in India, the rule of three hundred millions of people by a handful of aliens, is described as a "miracle." He will not hear of that word, and he is even more impatient of the suggestion that British rule rests on the sword. British rule, he insists, endures and is secure in India because on the whole it does for the people of India what they want done, and for no other reason whatever. There is no European nation which could govern India on any other terms. The idea that three hundred millions of people, who know how to kill

and have very little objection to being killed, could be held down by a few thousand British troops, or that a native army could be voluntarily recruited to support the Government, unless on the whole the people approved that Government, was, he declared, a self-evident absurdity. British rule did for India as a whole what the immense majority of its inhabitants were fully aware they could not do for themselves, and for the rest, it set them free to live their own lives and cultivate their own local patriotism, as Bengalis, Madrassis, Punjabis, Rajputs, Pathans. My Indian friend goes on to express his surprise at the timidity of the Government of India about sedition. Among the masses of the Indian people, he insists, there is no sedition whatever, but there is a movement growing up for which we ourselves are responsible—a movement for education and better conditions of life, which we must be careful not to call sedi-

tion, and which will bring the natives of India more and more into the stream of Western life.

Another conversation comes back to me. It is with a group of Indian journalists and writers in the camp at Delhi, and they are talking about the Indian civilian. They praise him unstintedly for his many virtues: his honesty, his industry, his sense of justice, his disinterestedness. They acknowledge that he knows the Indian peasant better than they do, and since 90 per cent. of all India is agricultural, that is much. But one point of criticism they make and make unanimously. He thinks too little of the big towns—Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore,—and the movements that are going on in them. Granted that the immense majority of the people are peasants, is it not still true, and has it not always been true, that all new movements and intellectual impulses come from the towns, and why should India in

this respect be different from other countries? It is a little hard that these English young men, intellectuals themselves and fresh from Oxford and Cambridge, should be so scornful of the Babus and students who are humbly trying to walk in their footsteps, and that they should set up as their idols the ignorant and superstitious peasant and the fierce and murderous Pathan. Why should the English be so scornful of the poor Indian, when he wants to be just a little like the English?

The reader may ask, what has this to do with the cantonment and the city? It has everything to do. The city and cantonment lying side by side but never touching exactly realized what my young Indian friend said about the Government doing for India what it wanted done and setting it free to live its own life. Success on this line did not depend on bridging the gulf between the two, but on each keeping within its own



sphere, the sphere of Government being to keep order, do justice, secure respect for property, prevent foreign invasion, but not otherwise to interfere with the religion, customs, superstitions, and domestic life of the people themselves. It was positively a merit from this point of view that the English did not walk about the city, poke their noses into native houses, attempt to play drill-sergeant like a Prussian bureaucrat. A genial, mutually tolerant relation was set up in which each lived its own life and did its own work, the root assumption being that the Indian was an Indian and the Englishman an Englishman. The result was—and is—that India strikes you in an extraordinary way as being mistress of herself in spite of her rulers, as unannexed, unsubdued, unexploited, save by her own people. But the smooth working of this system depends on the cheerful acceptance by the Indian of the rôle assigned to

him, and on his continuing to regard government as something outside his sphere, something imposed upon him by a divine authority which it is useless or impious to question, something which at best is a beneficent mystery, at worst an unavoidable oppression, and in either case useless to worry about or fight against, unless religion is outraged. A vast number of the Indian people, whether Mohammedans or Hindus, do in fact regard government thus, and are content that the West should rule, so long as the East may live its own life. But there is a minority, small but growing, which is building a bridge for itself between the city and the cantonment, which has imbibed Western ideas, insists on knowing and criticizing what is going on at Simla and Calcutta, and actively resents its exclusion from the European preserve.

Anglo-India perceives, quite justly, that this kind of man threatens the entire can-

tonment system, from the big cantonments of Calcutta and Simla to the little up-country cantonments of Madras or the Punjab. The India which this man wants is a new one in which the Europeans will have to go into the bazaars and consent to reason with and justify themselves to the native critics of the administration. To the Anglo-Indian of the old school there is something morbid and even repulsive in this prospect. The native, he is always saying, is a child and should behave as such. It is as though a precocious infant were disturbing the peace of a well-ordered nursery. So habitually, as my Indian friends complain, he praises the native who is a child or who, like the Pathan, has simple and primitive emotions, and contrasts him with the sophisticated, Europeanized Babu, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter.

One must get this point of view into one's mind in order to understand the contention

which is going on between the Government and the Babu. The old India in which the native was governed entirely for his own advantage by capable and disinterested English gentlemen was a very wonderful thing, and in all history there is nothing quite like it. But it had its points of danger, as the Mutiny showed. Autocratic Governments may be threatened quite as formidably by peasant risings as by town-bred sedition. As every experienced official will tell you, there is something incalculable about the superstitions and prejudices of the peasant against which the best-intentioned Government cannot be secure. So, even if left alone with the ryot, the Government is not free from anxious problems. But I find a general consensus of opinion among Indians and Anglo-Indians that the old India is changing, and changing rapidly. Some like it and some deplore it, but all admit it. And somehow, the canton-

ment has to make its terms with the new kind of Indian who will not accept exclusion from government as his final destiny or confine himself to the interests of his own bazaar.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CIVIL SERVICE AND ITS CRITICS

The complaint of the civilian—His relation to Parliament and the home critic—The changing East—Opportunities for all the talents—The need of a partnership—Some drawbacks of Anglo-Indian life—The great peace adventure—The competition of London

NO one can be for even a short time in India without becoming aware that the Civil Service feels aggrieved. One official after another will tell you that it is the butt of unfounded criticisms by ignorant members of Parliament, that it is incessantly blamed by newspapers which know neither its virtues nor its difficulties, and that this is having a serious effect in discouraging

able young men from joining it. In vain do you reply that the great majority of the English public and the English newspapers entertain the highest respect for the I.C.S., and pay unceasing tributes to its capacity and disinterestedness. All, they rejoin, that reaches them is blame, which is faithfully cabled to India by Reuter's Agency, and repeated with malicious glee in the vernacular Press.

It is difficult for anyone who comes straight from England and is accustomed to the rough and tumble of affairs at home to make the proper allowance for this sensitiveness to criticism. To him it seems the natural fate of those who govern to be subject to buffetings with or without good cause, and he sees no reason why the Government of India should be exempt. But all the analogies of Western public life fail you in India. The Indian official is a permanent Civil Servant without any

parliamentary chief to defend him in public ; and he has not, so far, discovered any forum in which he can defend himself with effect. Hence his sense of being attacked with his hands tied behind his back. Nor is there any solid public opinion in India to which appeal can be made. The few Englishmen are scattered over an immense area, and most of them are far too busy with their own allotted tasks to have much time to spare for the doings of their neighbours, unless these unhappily become notorious. At the best, the opinion which judges is entirely official, and officials are not less prone to criticize each other than the members of other professions. But the civilian has a peculiar grievance when the globe-trotter or travelling M.P. comes out in the cool of the year, enjoys all that is agreeable of Indian life, and then, on going back, delivers himself of harsh and hasty judgments on the men who toil



through the Indian summer on the burning plains.

With this feeling any humane man must have the utmost sympathy, and yet I am afraid it is impossible to promise relief. On the whole, the system which exposes Indian officialdom to the criticism of Parliament and Press in this country has worked well. Many of the best impulses in the government of the country have come from Secretaries of State who have never set eyes on India, and the interchange of ideas between England and India, of which criticism is an essential part, helps immensely to keep the service alive and to correct its bureaucratic tendencies. / Possibly, if Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald could realize how much greater is their capacity to wound in India than in England, they would moderate their style; but one returns from India feeling that even a combative and critical interest in its affairs

is a far better condition than any mere apathy which left the Service to go its own way. The Service, however, has partly itself to thank if curiosity of late years has been livelier than usual. It has talked to us a great deal about Indian unrest, from which the Britisher has argued that something is wrong which needs looking into. Infallibility has always to be justified by results.

But still more, as every Anglo-Indian will tell you, the *Zeitgeist* is at work among the Indians. No one now talks about the unchanging East. The older officials say that the conditions of the Service have absolutely changed in the twenty-five or thirty years that they have known it. The rule of the benevolent, unquestioned autocrat is over. Every step that the Government takes has to be argued and justified to the Legislative Councils, the native Press, the bazaar, the increasing number of young Indians who

have imbibed Western ideas. To many of the older officials—excellent men whose services can scarcely be exaggerated—the process seems equally disagreeable and undignified. It was not in their contract that they should have to come out of their sanctums and enter into argument with glib Babus, who will perhaps beat them at the word game. Their ideal was that of the silent efficient with no capacity for public speaking. Anglo-India works with the pen and piles up mountains of memoranda (many of which go for ever unread), and it has a corresponding contempt for the man who is effective with his tongue, for the Parliamentary, the platform orator, the Congress speaker. So far is this driven that positive incapacity for public speaking seems to be counted a virtue; and among the more conservative the opinion is freely expressed that the Service is ceasing to be an occupation for gentlemen and scholars. I

have heard a man say in India that he will not have his sons or nephews go into a Service where they will be "slanged by journalists and M.P.'s at home and have to engage in slanging-matches with Babus in India."

This is worth inquiring into, for if anything could threaten our position in India it would be a failure to get good men of the right type. Beyond question, if the grandson of a civilian of the sixties went to India on the strength of his grandfather's account of it, or even, let us say, expecting it to conform to hasty generalizations from Mr. Kipling's novels, he would be disappointed. But if he has an open mind for a living and changing world, I can imagine nothing which could more reasonably fire his ambition than to take a hand in shaping the destinies of India in its present stage. The problems ahead are of profound interest, if also of great intricacy. They give

scope for a greater variety of talents than could be enlisted in any other part of the world. There is room for the benevolent despot administering the affairs of a simple and rural people ; for politicians equipped with the art of public speaking and management, and able to hold their own with the political Indians ; for students and linguists with an interest in Oriental religions and customs ; for statesmen able to handle the revenue questions, the defensive problems, and the external relations of the Indian Empire. Less and less, as it seems to me, will India offer attractions to those who merely seek to win their bread there that they may enjoy their leave and retire early on their pensions, but more and more should it offer scope for original and adventurous minds. The old Service was the finest thing of its kind the world has ever seen, but the new Service which is being evolved must differ from it in a great variety of

ways. It must be fairly thick-skinned, and ready to do battle cheerfully with its opponents and critics ; it must turn the blind eye or give the benefit of the doubt to much that the old school would have called sedition ; proceed on the assumption that the educated Indian, if properly educated, will be its friend and not its enemy, and that only by enlisting him and bringing him into partnership can the work of civilizing the great masses of India proceed. All over India you see admirable work to improve the condition of the people, and to rescue them from plague, disease, and famine ; but it proceeds very slowly, or is pulled up at a dead wall of native prejudice, which the Western administrator unaided is powerless to overcome. At this point partnership with the educated Eastern is essential, and if British administrators could not command it, their work, so far as it is a civilizing mission, would be at a standstill.

In one of the admirable essays to be found in the volume entitled "Asia and Europe," Mr. Meredith Townsend predicts that we shall cease to retain India, largely, if I understand him aright, because our rule will eventually bore the people of India beyond endurance. Sometimes in talking to Anglo-Indians one is tempted to the opposite speculation—whether we shall not lose India because it bores ourselves too much to go on governing it. One would give an imperfect impression of official and military life if one did not notice in passing the homesickness, the depression, the distaste with the East, the longing to be back in the Western world, which afflicts some Englishmen always and many Englishmen for periods of their life in India. There are times when this Eastern malaise seems to affect the whole governing class, and when it depreciates itself, underrates its strength, and appears to despair of its task.

It is very important that men who have a real distaste for the East should not be kept there compulsorily, but be offered a way of escape to more congenial employment at home. An administration of pessimists will do no good in India. There, if anywhere, men need faith and courage to carry them through a task which would otherwise be a mere aimless assertion of power.

For the right kind of man, then, the Indian career is a great career, and, to my eye, it seems at this moment to offer greater opportunities than ever before. But there is no disguising the fact that it requires corresponding sacrifices. The life which man or woman—and still more woman—leads in India is highly artificial. In the cantonments is a slice of the English upper-middle class, cut off from all other classes, and for that reason uniquely thrown back on its own resources. All that subtle interplay



of class with class in the streets, in the shops, in the villages, which counts for so much in English life, is missing. The pool is not refreshed by running streams ; there is little diversity of occupations, there is no scope for philanthropy, no art, no music. The children must go home to be reared and educated, when they reach the age of five or six, and the wife must often follow the children and leave the husband behind. To complete the shading in the picture, one must add a constant background of tropical disease, especially malarial fever, which still resists the scientific efforts that have so greatly reduced enteric and cholera. These, however, are drawbacks and difficulties of which young Englishmen have made nothing in pursuit of conquest or military adventure. The question is whether they will brave them for the great peace adventure of the Indian problem. If the attractions of London life prove too great for the abler

academic men who have hitherto manned the Service, and India becomes only the second or last choice of those who look for an administrative career, the conditions of entry may have to be reconsidered. Often when in India the idea crosses one's mind of an Imperial Service corps of able men who shall go out and home and refresh their minds by contact with different parts of the Empire. A sufficiency of men serving under those conditions might bring new ideas, and escape the limitations and depressions which are almost inseparable from a life spent wholly in India.

One last reflection occurs to me, and I will venture it in spite of the impatience with which moralizings on this subject by English writers are received by residents in India. How much the English life would be enriched if that gap between the cantonment and the bazaar, of which I spoke in a previous chapter, could be

bridged, and some more human intercourse developed between the two to fill what must otherwise be lacking in the life of the white man in a strange land! That subject is commonly spoken of purely from the Indian point of view, but it is really as important to the Englishman as to the Indian. Apart from the climate, the difficulties of the Anglo-Indian life are those of the racial estrangement, and, if one could imagine it removed, there would be an enormous widening of interests and activities. Anglo-Indians of the old school will tell you that this is an idle dream, that race, caste, religion, forbid it on both sides; but when so much is changing, one may hope that this too may gradually yield and that in time a real companionship may be established between the Englishmen who are at work in India and the Indians who are working for their own country. I am encouraged in this hope by seeing it realized

in the lives of many doctors, teachers, missionaries, and not a few officials and military men, who live in India as they would in their own country and have intimate friendships with their Indian neighbours.

## CHAPTER XII

### A DIALOGUE ABOUT RELIGION

A round-table conference—A defence of Hinduism—Mohammedan objections—The effects of caste—The position of women—Philosophy and cow-worship

MY friend H., who is rather anxious about the letting loose of English Radical journalists among "agitators," is greatly reassured when I tell him that most of my talks with my Indian friends have been about religion and caste. There is, he says, no harm in that. For myself, I am not quite so sure. Everything in India seems, by one road or another, to come back to religion, and certainly, as Sir Valentine Chirol has told us, half its politics are

religious. But, anyhow, let me try to record the results of some of these conversations.

I am in a group of Mohammedans and Hindus, all highly intelligent men, who speak English fluently. We have dined together well and temperately, and are ready for debate. I pose the old question, "What is a Hindu?" A Mohammedan answers first with the accepted legal definition, "A man who calls himself a Hindu and worships the cow." By no means, say the Hindus in chorus; a Hindu, like a poet, must be *born*. You may become a Mohammedan by calling yourself so, or by being converted to the doctrine, but never a Hindu if you were not born one. You may cease to be a Hindu by becoming something else—e.g., a Christian or a Mohammedan, but you cannot become one, if you were born something else. Hinduism, then, is not a propagandist religion? No; it has no need to be. The Hindus are hundreds of millions;

that is enough for any religion. Are the Sikhs and Jains true Hindus? Undoubtedly. Hinduism is very tolerant; it embraces innumerable forms of worship, it ranges from the high philosophy of the educated Brahmin to the primitive cults of the peasants. It fits all moods, all levels of intelligence; behind its symbols and ceremonies, which a shallow observer might call idolatrous, is a pure monotheism which sees God in everything and uses the cow as a sacramental symbol.

The Mohammedans demur to this idealized version of the Hindu religion. Whatever the learned doctors may say, Hinduism is, for a vast number of its adherents, idolatry and superstition. The average Hindu worships the cow, and not the deity. His ideal is resignation, which may easily become servility. The Hindu lives, not for this world, but for his next reincarnation. He accepts his lot, if a bad one, as due to

his faults in a previous existence ; he can only progress by dying and being born again. Hinduism, therefore, is incompatible with progress, as the West understands it. It has no doctrine for the community or the nation. It thinks only of the individual and his development through a succession of lives. It is fatal to equality or democracy, for it requires men to be divided into ranks and castes according to their supposed merits in other existences ; and these dividing lines cannot be obliterated by any effort in this life. Hinduism counsels the acceptance of what is, and historically is accountable for the fact that India has always been subject to a foreign yoke. Every Hindu is ready to die when he thinks God calls him, but no Hindu will strike a blow to deliver himself from a fate which he thinks to be divinely imposed on him.

A Hindu replies that this strict logic is



alien to the Indian mind, and that a Hinduism is being evolved which will keep all that is spiritual in the ancient doctrine, and yet be compatible with progressive ideas. All religions teach resignation to the divine will, but most of them find a way of utilizing human effort. May not Hinduism do the same? In that case, some one answers, Hinduism must abolish caste. The idea of men being irretrievably assigned to particular ranks is fatal to efforts for self-improvement. Caste, the Hindu maintains, has been of enormous benefit to the people of India. If it separates, it also joins together. Men of the same caste are bound to each other for protection, mutual aid, and succour. This is true even of the lowest castes. The evils of caste are gradually being mitigated, but if it is to go, something else must be substituted for it, and no one, so far, has suggested anything. In the view of the speaker, caste at present

served the purposes of trade unions, friendly societies, freemasonry, and poor-law for vast numbers of people who would otherwise find themselves desolate and isolated in a hungry and unfriendly world. Europeans laid too much stress on the divisions of caste, and failed to see its uses in combining men.

The conversation at this point takes on a slightly more personal flavour. That is all very well, but would our friend the Brahmin abate one jot of his claims to be superior to the rest of his fellow-Hindus, and will not he and other Brahmins fight to the last against any change which would lessen the distance between them and their fellows? The Brahmin takes up the challenge with good-humour. It is, he admits, a great advantage to be born a Brahmin, and he is thankful to the overruling Providence which gave him that privilege. But, like other privileged persons,

he has had to make terms with modern times, and things were rapidly changing in India. Many causes were at work to undermine caste, and chief among them the habit of railway travelling. For the last ten years he had been accustomed to make a yearly journey with twelve of his friends to the annual congress of a society of which they were all members, and there were six different castes among the twelve. *The first time they went six different meals had to be ordered at the stations at which they stopped to refresh themselves, with the result that most of them starved. The next time they had the same meal, but in different corners of the refreshment-rooms. The third time they had the same meal at the same table. When men began to move about, segregation broke down, and evasion was everywhere practised, though the forms survived. By and by all harsh divisions would pass away by general*

consent, leaving only the spiritual values of the caste system. For himself, personally, he said frankly that he would go as far as he could carry his mother and brothers, but no farther. That day he had eaten with a European (pointing to me), and he could go back and tell his mother, and nothing would happen. Ten years ago she would have driven him from the house. His bearer, however, was still shocked, and, when they started on their present journey, he refused to eat with men of other castes. The consequence was that he starved and had now come to see sense.

The mention of the mother led me to raise the question of women's influence in India and the retarding effect which, it seemed to me, the view taken of women and their seclusion and lack of education must have on any forward movement. There was general agreement that the influence of the women was very great, and

that their seclusion, so far from lessening it, rather increased and concentrated it. The women, as a whole, were against the new ways, and undoubtedly they must be reckoned a conservative force. But purdah also, like caste, was gradually giving way before modern conveniences and necessities. The Hindus maintained that it had been borrowed from the Mohammedans and was no necessary part of their system. In any case, I was wrong in supposing it was enforced by men. It was the woman's choice, quite as much as the man's, and a great many years must elapse before the women of India would reconcile themselves to any considerable change. In the woman's view the dignity of the sex was better maintained in the Eastern than in the Western way.

I hazarded the idea that, broadly speaking, Mohammedanism in India corresponded to Protestantism and Hinduism to Catholi-

cism in Europe. I spoke of the apparent severity of the mosque, and contrasted it with the ritualism of the Hindu temple. Those of the company who had been in Europe demurred to the comparison, except with many qualifications. There was, I was told, a philosophy behind Hinduism which had no counterpart in Catholic dogmas. Mohammedanism was nearer to Unitarianism than to ordinary Protestantism. My comparison found little favour, and I did not press it, but none the less in its outward manifestations the contention between Mohammedan and Hindu in Northern India does strike me as bearing a remarkable resemblance to that between Protestant and Catholic in North Ireland. The Pathan is an Ulsterman in his religion.

As we broke up, my friend the Brahmin begged me to come and see him again, that we might have another talk about Hinduism. So I went next day to his tent, and we were

quickly plunged into the mysteries. For half an hour or more he expounded to me the Hindu doctrine of the divine absolute and the inadequacy of human ideas to it, in language which might have been borrowed from Lord Haldane's "Pathway to Reality." Reincarnation, he insisted, alone gave the clue to man's existence and his ascent to the divine; and with all his heart he protested against the argument of Western philosophers that the final stage of unity with the divine absolute was equivalent to extinction. It was, in his view, the great defect of Western thought that it was unable to grasp the idea that the highest existence must take this form. Then I asked him frankly a quite simple question, suggested by our discussion of the previous evening. Did he worship the cow? Of course he worshipped the cow, or rather, to speak strictly, worshipped the divinity through the cow, and he could imagine no

greater calamity to India than that cow-worship should be undermined. I begged him to explain to me how the worship of the cow was related to his philosophy of the absolute—how and where, in fact, the cow impinged upon the absolute. Gladly and fully he gave the explanation, but my Western mind stumbled and halted, and I have sadly to confess that I cannot record it with any coherence. It was none the less high sacramental doctrine, and as I listened to it the question occurred to me whether, if I attempted to explain to this man the Catholic doctrine of the Mass and the reasons which made the sacred wafer an object of veneration, I should be able to make it any more intelligible to him than he made his doctrine to me. Practically he seemed to say that a devout Hindu saw the divinity indwelling in everything, and worshipped it under the sacramental forms of animals, trees, and even rocks and stones.



In a portion of this little narrative I have compressed the substance of several separate conversations into one dialogue ; but that is merely for the convenience of the reader, and I have tried faithfully to reproduce what was told me without adding anything of my own. Possibly it may help the reader to realize the far-reaching effect of the religious ideas which still affect the entire population with inconsiderable exceptions. I am not suggesting that the Hindu peasant reasons about his religion in the philosophic manner of my friends at Delhi. He is no more capable of that than the Italian peasant is of talking Catholic theology. Outwardly the Hindu temples and their ritual bear the marks of heathendom, and many strange cults that are unintelligible and repulsive to the Western have a great popularity. But you may hear humble Hindus talking quite simply of their duty to God and their readiness to obey the divine call, and many

millions of them seem in essentials to be governed by this quite simple faith. When the National Congress assembled at Calcutta the other day, the chairman of the Reception Committee opened the proceedings with what can only be called a religious address. He described how the people of Bengal had taken a solemn vow on October 16 that, come what might, they would not be divided, and how, when it was not fulfilled, they had grown "dumb with despair," and asked "whether it was going to be annulled for their sins." "That tension," he went on, "is now ended; it has pleased God, after much suffering and tribulation, to hear our prayers, and through His own chosen instrument on earth He has proclaimed the fulfilment of our vow." Very unfamiliar language, to be sure, at a gathering of political agitators, and for that reason I have even heard it called cant and hypocrisy. That, I feel sure, is a profound

mistake. There is undeniably a school of agnostics and secularists among the Young Indians, but they are a very small number, and the vast majority speak and think of government and political events in precisely the terms that this speaker used.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A NOTE ON INDIAN BUILDINGS

A beautiful tomb—The secret of the Taj—Shah Jahan as a builder—Deserted cities—Amber—The stones of India

**D**RIVE through Agra city and out along the dusty road by the river-side, and you will come presently to the loveliest little garden with a marble mausoleum in the centre of it. This is the tomb of Ghiyas Beg, the Persian high treasurer of the Emperor Jahangir, and grandfather of the Lady of the Taj, who erected this memorial to him and his wife the year before she died. It is small as compared with the great buildings of Agra, but a thing of exquisite beauty. Especially

it gives you the sense, which belongs more or less to all the Shah Jahan buildings, of being a jewel-box enlarged, with white marble and alabaster in place of ivory and mother-of-pearl for its material. The eye is charmed with the balance and symmetry of its design, and nothing could be more neatly placed than the four towers at the corners or the pavilion on top. It is, nevertheless, craftsmanship rather than architecture. Within and without it is a miracle of dainty skill, carried to the utmost refinement in the lacework of the marble screens and in the exquisitely fitted inlaid pattern on the walls. Except for the two alabaster sarcophagi in the lower chamber and the corresponding cenotaphs in the pavilion above, you would never imagine this building to be a tomb. You look in vain for any touch of religion or solemnity recognizable by a Western eye. It more resembles some dainty lady's bower than the mausoleum which is known to the

West. Compare it with the grim vault beneath the Church of the Capuchins at Vienna where the coffins of the Habsburgs are piled together, and you will be set thinking and puzzling about the different attitudes of East and West towards death.

The Taj also is a miracle of craftsmanship, and I can imagine the designer of it working from a six-foot model. Yet it is also splendidly and soaringly architectural. I know the folly of trying to write anything about the Taj at this time of day, and yet, for a moment, I am tempted. It is one of the few great buildings of the world which surpass all descriptions or representations of them. Literally, one may say of it that the half has not been told. But the other half cannot be told; it can only be felt. Walking by it when the moon is up, or towards evening, when the whole great mass shimmers mistily against a saffron sky, a very prosaic man will begin talking about his soul

to a complete stranger. For hours I have sat in the lovely garden which spreads about it, trying to realize what its qualities are and why the actual thing so far surpasses any picture or photograph of it that I have ever seen. At the end I can only get to one or two prosaic facts. First of all, the whole effect of building and garden—for each is essential to the other—as taken in by the eye, is far bigger than can be embraced in any picture or photograph. Try making a rough sketch, starting from the building itself, of the converging, or rather diverging, lines of the water-tanks, grass-plots, paths, and formal lines of cypresses, all of which enter into the architectural effect, and you will find that they are hopelessly outside any possible picture, before you have got half-way down the vista from the Taj itself to the main gate. Next, you will find that the poise of the building depends on getting rightly in the eye the three separate levels

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by which the garden ascends to the platform on which it is planted. In almost every photograph that I have seen these are hopelessly confused, partly by the inevitable foreshortening of the lines, and partly because the trees cut off the structural boundaries of the different levels, which the eye remembers even when it cannot see them. Finally, all photographs, and most drawings, show dazzling, clear-cut outlines and great masses of black or dark blue shadow in the recessed spaces on the face of the building. The reality, on the four days that I saw it, was entirely different. The domes and minarets faded into the sky and reflected its colour; the shadows were amber, with a film of pale blue, and there were no two of the same tint or tone in the whole building. It puzzled me long to discover the cause of this beautiful variety of colour, but it is plainly due to the reflection of light into the shadows from the white marble platform and from



the water-tanks below. Every cunning device of construction conspires to this subtle and beautiful effect. The light plays with the shadow, and is given back from marble and water. The central façade takes it at one angle; the wings are so turned as to take it at another; with every angle there is a change of colour, and each ripple on the water makes a shimmer on the marble above it.

Far too much, it seems to me, has been made of the Italian or French work at the Taj. Austin, of Bordeaux, may have worked at some of the decorations in the inner chamber, but, if so, he had little to teach the Indian designers. In Akbar's palace, in the Fort of Agra, you may see most of the designs, which are supposed to be European renaissance, wrought quite as beautifully by Indian hands twenty or thirty years earlier. The Taj is pure Mogul, and the renaissance is Shah Jahan's. The world is familiar with

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the romantic story of the Taj, but otherwise it knows far too little of that man of genius, the magnificent Lorenzo of the Mogul Empire. In all this region of India you feel his charm and power, and you place him for ever afterwards in your mind as one of the great artistic influences of the world. Hardly even now can I bring myself to believe that the same mind inspired two such wholly different masterpieces as the Taj and the great mosque at Delhi. Modern India has revised the story of the last days of Shah Jahan. The old version was that he was cruelly treated by his son, Aurungzeb, who usurped his throne and made him a prisoner. The new version is that, like the mad King of Bavaria, he had a monomania for building which threatened to ruin his subjects, and that, to save themselves, they put him gently away about the time when he was planning the black Taj on the other side of the Jumna, with a silver bridge to join it to

the white one. His place of confinement was the exquisite Jasmine bower in the Fort, from which, according to tradition, he gazed all day across the river to the white Taj. Our guide asked me reproachfully whether an unnatural son would have devised so charming a retreat for a father whom he hated. My knowledge of Mogul psychology does not enable me to answer this question, but with all consideration for the landowners and rich gentlemen whom this mad builder was supposed to have ruined, I wish they had left him at large till he had finished the black Taj and the silver bridge. Never did madness more thoroughly justify itself to posterity.

India is covered with deserted cities. There is Fatehpur-Sikri, the red sandstone city near Agra, which Akbar built and deserted, Amber, which the Rajputs deserted, and half a dozen deserted cities or great fortresses, with immense walls and

ramparts, to the south of Delhi. Looking at any one of these, one realizes the immense power of the Oriental despot. He can proclaim an ἀνάστασις or removal of the whole population at pleasure. The whim comes over him to build a new city, and the entire community is uprooted. I asked my guide at Amber why this beautiful city was deserted, and his answer was simple, and, I suppose, traditional: "Holy man said must go." The truth is, I suspect, that the Maharajah who did it had ambitions in town-planning, and desired to be remembered as an eighteenth-century Shah Jahan. Instead of which he built Jeypore, and painted it all brown-pink! To this day his descendants claim that he anticipated the celebrated Haussmann by a whole century; and if enormously broad dusty streets, intersecting each other at right angles, and lined with low houses of which the upper stories are largely in ruins, entitle him to this fame,

he is welcome to it. His *chefs-d'œuvre* are the Palace of the Winds, a shapeless structure with a fantastic false façade which appears to be made of cardboard, and another enormous Palace, which has, I think, the largest zenana in India, as well as a quite simple and pleasing Hall of Audience, which comes as an agreeable surprise amid gaudy and rubbishy surroundings. The present Maharajah has added to the public amenities of the city a public garden on the Western model, which as nearly as possible resembles Battersea Park without its river front, and which has the great merit that it cannot be painted pink. There you will see elderly Babus in spectacles playing lawn-tennis in black coats under a blazing sun. The conscientious tourist should by no means miss this city, or fail to visit the great museum of Indian Art, which, housed in a big building of the modern Maharajah type, will sensibly add to

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his knowledge and education. Best of all, he will see in its broad streets and bazaars such a throng of Rajput human kind as is nowhere else gathered together in that country. For myself, I do not at all regret the days spent in Jeypore, but at the end of them I am left wondering what could have induced the potentate who founded it to drive his people from the romantic hill-city of Amber into this hot, flat, and dusty town on the plain.

For Amber is one of the abiding lovely visions which you take away with you from India. It comes on you suddenly as you turn a corner of the detestable road which leads to it from Jeypore, and claims its place at once as one of the half-dozen most beautiful hill-cities in the world. It lies in a rocky gorge surrounded by steep mountains, its great palace planted on a spur of the foot-hills, and charmingly reflected in a little lake below. The city walls run precipitously

to the top of the mountains, where they are crowned by forts ; the city itself spreads out on the floor of the valley, rising in places to right and left, and fitting itself neatly into gaps in the rock. From above you look down on a medley of cupolas and minarets, broken here and there by the mitre-shaped domes of the Hindu temples, a vision of pale brown stone and white marble blended on a ground of dense green trees. The houses are mere shells if you look into them, but they have all the airs of departed greatness. Most of them are large, and richly designed in the Indo-Aryan style ; some have big walled gardens, with marble pavilions for summer-houses, and dainty kiosks at the angles of the walls. Through a gap in the mountains you look to a desolate plain which stretches to another line of blue hills on the horizon. The palace is intact, and a rich specimen of the Hindu palatial style, as it was before Shah

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Jahan came to refine on it. In the temple by the entrance a goat is sacrificed daily, as if to remind the god that Amber is still a city, but none the less an air of desolation hangs over this beautiful valley, and my guide says, with a shrug of the shoulder, that it is all infested with "snakes, tigers, and black pigs." It may be, but the traveller who is on an elephant, or, still worse, in a bullock-cart, thinks more of the blistering sun and shadeless sea of dust through which he must make his way back to Jeypore and his hotel.

How one wishes that Ruskin could have come here and interpreted for India, as he did for Venice, the genius which finds expression in the glorious buildings that are scattered in such profusion over the country. A "Stones of India," written, not by an archæologist or expert, but by a man of fervour and imagination, might dispel for ever the crude notion that India is uncivi-



lized. The slightest acquaintance with Indian history or philosophy makes you pause when the cheerful English philistine talks of the "inferior race," and you are least inclined to use that language when you have looked at these splendid monuments of imaginative art and realized their manifold expression of human moods. From the vast walls and ramparts of the deserted cities south of Delhi to the exquisite and all but effeminate delicacy of the Shah Jahan buildings at Agra, they range through a scale of infinite variety. And yet, on another side, they mark the essential contrast between the wealth and the poverty of India. There is nothing to bridge the gap between the palace and the hovel. The great mosque towers over a city of slums. This people can build everything except houses to live in themselves, and none of their dynasties of aristocratic rulers has troubled to teach them that art. It is meet,

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says a Turkish proverb, that rulers should be rich and subjects poor, and these remains of old India seem to stamp that lesson on the land. So it was, to a large extent, in Europe during the Middle Ages, and in this as in many other respects one has to think of the Ind'ia of to-day as mediæval.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SCIENCE AND THE PLAGUE

The background of disease—Difficulties of sanitation—The Bombay Plague Laboratory—A transformed banquet hall—The cultivation of the germ—An unhappy accident—The snake department

**A**LWAYS in India you are conscious of a background of disease. Plague, enteric, cholera, smallpox, and malaria take toll of the population by millions, and latterly even scarlet fever has entered upon the scene. It need not be said that of these scourges by far the worst in recent years has been plague, which is comparatively a new-comer, or at least a *revenant* after centuries of absence. But for plague, the boast could have been made that, thanks to sanitary

and medical science, the standard of health in the country had been steadily rising, and that a lower death-rate and less sickness were among the boons that British government had conferred upon India. Certainly this is true of the Army and of the Anglo-Indian community. By drastic sanitary measures, coupled with inoculation, the enteric death-rate has been so reduced among the soldiers that service in India is practically no more dangerous to health than service in England. Ten years have shown a miraculous change in this respect, and the liability to cholera has at the same time been greatly diminished. But, if this improvement has extended to the native population, as in some degree it has, the gain, unfortunately, is much more than balanced by the loss from plague, which, in fourteen years from its first appearance, has extinguished nearly ten millions of the population, and threatens to become what

is called endemic, i.e., permanent and of annual recurrence. The figures of plague mortality are stupendous, and I will not harrow the reader by dwelling on them. Even the great population of India feels the loss of the millions swept away from this cause; and in certain parts of the country a real scarcity of labour appears to have followed. I was told, for instance, that there was considerable difficulty in getting sufficient labour for the docks at Bombay.

The Anglo-Indian says and thinks little about plague. The cantonment goes its own way, though within a stone's-throw of it the pestilence may be stalking through the city and claiming its victims by the score and the hundred. This is not because the cantonment is unfeeling, but simply because life must go on and work be done, and panic about the plague would be unnerving and unmanly. The English-

man has made up his mind that plague is a preventable calamity, from which with due precautions he can be practically immune ; and, as a matter of fact, the English victims are few and far between. . But the English doctor, the English man of science, and the English administrator are all the time indefatigably at work, searching out the causes of the disease, warning the threatened districts, providing prophylactics, endeavouring, so far as they can, to abate the filth and overcrowding which are its primary cause. There is no question that a benevolent despot armed with absolute power could extirpate the plague in a comparatively short space of time, but he would have to employ methods which would be the ruin of any ordinary despot subject to human limitations. He would have to move people forcibly from their homes, raze their houses to the ground, and utterly destroy furniture, bedding, clothes, and household

treasures. He would have to sweep up the vast Indian litter, and so change the habits of the people that it should not come again. He would have to decree that none went barefoot; and he would have to search out and exterminate the rat population of India. These last two propositions look disjointed, but they are really closely connected, for science has determined that the plague germ is communicated by the rat flea, which generally is picked up from the mud floor by the bare foot. Now, the rat population of India is certainly as large as the human, and probably a good deal larger. When a village has caught or killed one rat for every inhabitant, there are generally a good many over to start a new breed. An enthusiast may dream of an India which will be clean and tidy, but the practical man has to deal with the fact that for generations to come India will be dirty and squalid, and if the people are to be saved meanwhile,

it must be by some means which will protect them from the infection.

Here comes in the Haffkine anti-plague vaccine, which is being prepared every year in larger quantities and sent out all over India (and all over the world, when called for) from the Bacteriological Laboratory, now situated at Old Government House, Bombay. There is no question as to its efficacy. It has been rigorously tested by hundreds of experiments which leave no room for doubt that the inoculated are much less likely than their fellows to get plague, or, if they get it, to die from it. So, if you want to see science applied to the saving of life, go to this laboratory, where Dr. Glen Liston and his colleagues are working day by day, with infinite patience and care, to convert the deadly germ into its own antidote. It is oddly placed in a building designed as an official residence, with special facilities for entertainments on the large scale, but it



serves its purpose sufficiently until a better and more modern building can be provided, as it certainly ought to be before long. But let me try to describe it as it is now, or at least as it remains in my memory after a morning spent there under the Director, to whose unceasing labours, with the active encouragement of Sir George Clarke, the Governor of Bombay, this institution owes so much.

From a little garden in the glare of the Bombay sun you pass into a long dark room with four great tables running the whole length of it. On these are an immense number of flat glass decanters, with white paper caps over their stoppers. Each of them contains a whole colony of plague germs in process of incubation. In former days this room was the banqueting chamber of Old Government House, and one thinks a little grimly of its change of fortune. Imagine a Governor regaling his guests with

this potent vintage! I walked gingerly between the tables, peering into the brown fluid where death was coming to life. My guide glanced at the thermometer, and surveyed the scene with the pride of the connoisseur. The conditions were excellent, three thousand separate colonies were growing and multiplying, and certain cloudy streaks in the decanters indicated that they were healthy.

I asked how the parent germ was obtained and that led to an explanation. It is taken from the blood or the bubo of a patient suffering from the disease; it is next purified by being grown in test-tubes of broth jelly, and, according to its behaviour under various tests, it is definitely identified as the true plague bacillus. My guide took me into the test-room and showed me a little glass bulb in which the supreme test was being applied. In its medium of broth the true bacillus had developed a group of

little pale yellow filaments pointing downwards in the fluid. These are the famous "Haffkine's stalactites," and only when they are present can the cultivator be sure that he has got the real thing. From this he proceeds to a further culture, till the original seeds have developed the millions of germs that are incubating in the decanters. He knows their idiosyncrasies and characters, and examines them eagerly at each stage for intruders who are not true to type. Infinite are the precautions to keep them clean and isolated and of pure lineage. Then at the right moment they have to be killed by plunging the flasks into hot water, for the plague inoculator has discovered that the dead germ serves his purpose better than the living, and it is, of course, far safer to handle. The little glass tubes that contain the sterilized vaccine, which is the final product, can be sent all over the world and no harm come if one

of them breaks in transit or in the hands of a clumsy operator.

All sorts of possibilities pass through one's mind as one walks through this laboratory. What if some modern Borgia possessed himself of a few of those decanters of living germs? What if some anarchist practised with the germ instead of the bomb? The reader may be reassured. The most elaborate precautions are taken for the guarding of these flasks; but if a criminal got a consignment of them into his possession he would be much puzzled how to make use of it. If you want to get rid of a man, you had better kill him outright than inoculate him with a germ to which he may be immune. Nothing happens if the fluid is spilt on the floor; it must be under your skin, working through your veins. For that reason it is rather less dangerous to handle than most poisons, though it is well to take precautions, and

the laboratory assistants and vaccinators had better be inoculated themselves. More important are the precautions against impurity. Nothing gave the inoculation treatment a greater set-back or has in the long run sacrificed more lives that might have been saved than the untimely accident by which, in the early days of the movement, one little consignment of the lymph got contaminated with the tetanus germ, to the undoing of certain luckless patients who were, indeed, preserved from plague, but died in agony from an even more painful disease. The difficulty of overcoming prejudice was enormously increased by that accident, and to it may be traced many of the myths current among the more backward Indian people that the Government is seeking actually to inoculate them with plague in order to bring down the population. So far as human precautions can effect any object, there is no possibility

of a repetition of that disaster. Test upon test is imposed on each decoction, and nothing could surpass the delicacy of the mechanism which has been devised to keep the lymph from contact with the air, and the lips of the flask from being handled or soiled; or the skill with which it is decanted and the process completed by fusing the necks of the little glass vessels in which it is sent out. Much of this work is done by Indian assistants under Dr. Liston's supervision, and very well they do it. Each vessel is numbered and dated, so that, in case of accidents, its history can be traced.

Though the main purpose of the Parel laboratory is to serve as a farm for the plague germ, it has other duties to occupy its spare time and engage its adventurous spirits. It examines the rat which carries the flea which harbours the germ which infects the poor Indian. Scores of rats are brought daily to the laboratory by the in-

spectors and their officers, and the result of their examination enables houses and streets to be warned betimes. Then *anopheles*, the mosquito that carries the malaria germ, is always under the microscope, undergoing research. As I looked at him I felt for the first time a kind of pity for him. For he is himself a dreadful sufferer from the parasite he passes on, and the microscope shows the singularly disagreeable way in which his stomach is affected. But for real excitement, go to the snake department, where these intrepid researchers are seeking to find antidotes for snake-bites—which means that they must first get samples of venom to work on. Two boxes are brought in, one containing a large cobra and the other a Russell's viper, which is perhaps the most deadly or most rapid in its deadliness of all snakes. If it has succeeded in striking home, its victim is usually dead in four minutes. None the

less, the intrepid assistant seizes it swiftly by the throat and presents its head towards a paper-covered glass tumbler, held with equal courage by another assistant. It strikes viciously at the paper cover, and, looking close, I see a little pale yellow fluid trickle into the tumbler. The cobra does the same with extraordinary vehemence, its ugly hood and darting tongue expressing most vividly its anger and fright. After this exhausting effort both reptiles have to be forcibly fed before they are put back in their boxes. The action of the cobra-bite is comparatively slow, and the antidote is of real value, but the difficulty with the Russell's viper and other swiftly killing snakes is to get the antidote to the victim before he is dead.

It is by labours such as these that the man of science is doing his part in the unceasing battle with death and disease that is going on and must go on in India. The work is so essential and has justified itself



so completely that it will not, I hope, be permitted to languish for lack of funds, whether these are provided by Government or by private munificence. India is fortunate in having men who will devote their lives to this work, and the whole world will benefit from their labours.

## CHAPTER XV

### SOME CONCLUDING IMPRESSIONS

An administrative oddity—Civilian, military, and unofficial India—The localization of officials—Negative criticism—The vernacular Press—The lack of a middle-class—Careers for the young Indian—An agreeable surprise—The question for the future—The danger of unbelief—The temerity of the tyro

THE traveller in India can get only very broad impressions, and he is fully aware that these may be misleading or superficial. Yet a few of the things which strike a man who comes fresh from watching politics and administration at home may be set down for what they are worth. First of all, when he examines the Indian hierarchy, it seems to him a very singular arrangement

that membership of the Viceroy's Council, which is the Cabinet of the Government of India, should be, not the crown of the official career, but only a stage on the way to the highest promotion. To put it concretely, a man is a Member of Council, not after he has been a Lieutenant-Governor, but while he is still looking forward to that promotion. Administrative human nature may be different in Calcutta or Simla from what it is in Whitehall, but, if it is not, the Government of India is asking much even of its best men, when it expects them to be perfectly independent and courageous advisers of the authority to which they have to look for their next preferment. An ignorant Englishman might suppose this system to have been invented by some arbitrary Viceroy for the purpose of disarming his Council, whereas in all probability it is merely one of those traditional arrangements which have somehow come into being

and got themselves accepted as one of the inevitables of government.

Again, as one looks at the Government of India, a doubt assails one as to the wisdom of the arrangement which fills the India Council in London with so many retired officials. The two Councils in Simla and London seem admirably devised to disarm the active men who are in their prime and to exalt the seniors who are living on their past experience. Next it occurs to the onlooker that there is a singular separateness about the various units of the British community in India. The civil government works in one compartment, the Army in another, the non-official British in a third. People talk habitually as if the Government and the Army were two co-ordinate and independent authorities, and the different departments of government seem similarly isolated and separated. It matters little, and it may even be a good thing, that they

should be free and candid critics of each other, but it does matter that they should, so to speak, be working across each other and with such apparent disregard of each other's aims and objects. I have spoken in a previous chapter of the singular absence of anything which can be called public opinion in India, but perhaps it would be more accurate to say that there are a great many separate opinions which tend to cancel each other. Another thing that surprises an observer new to the country is the extent to which the Civil Service is localized. He will meet men who have spent twenty years in India but have never visited any of the places which he will see as a matter of course in a two months' tour. Very few public servants travel for pleasure in India, and polo, I am told, now fills the place of the sporting expeditions which formerly took soldiers and Civil Servants all over the country. The desire of the exile is to save

up his leave until he can return home, but the inevitable result is that very few people can get any vision of India as a whole. The majority have an intense local experience which fights with other local experience in shaping the general policy, but few guiding ideas about the adjustment of their views to what in this country we call public policy. The globe-trotter is much despised in India, but it does often occur to one that the year's interval which now elapses between the time when a young man passes his examination and the time when he goes to India might profitably be spent in a tour round India at the Government's expense.

Again, if one comes from a country where all politicians, whatever their differences, profess to be in search of constructive ideas, one feels the excessive stress which is laid in India on the negative side of the political problem. Argument seems habitually to be conducted on the assumption that when

certain extremists have been disposed of, everything is finished. As against these extremists the Government is obviously in the right. India obviously is not ripe for Parliamentary Government, nor is she yet, if she ever will be, a nation in the European sense of the word. The millions of India have few ideas in common with Western democracy. But all this, though true, is no answer to the intelligent Indian who asks for a career in his own country and some voice in the government of his own province or town. And, if I may respectfully say so, the habit of decrying the Babu and of assuming that every native who has got himself educated in the European way is an upstart and a seditionist is run to death in India. The word "sedition" has no exact meaning in India, as it would have at home; and it is used indiscriminately of the anarchist, the intelligent critic, and the unintelligent grumbler. Europeans in India

habitually talk of the native Press as seditious, though few of them read it or have any idea of the varieties of opinion that are expressed in it. Unquestionably the mushroom vernacular Press is a very great evil, and for a great many reasons which have little or nothing to do with politics. But the bad papers will only be driven out when good ones can be established ; and a more sympathetic attitude towards the better kind of Indian newspapers and a disposition to welcome honest criticism, even when it is thought to be mistaken, would, I feel sure, have its reward in India. If you treat men as pariahs, they are very likely to behave as pariahs ; and not a little of the present friction with the Press arises from honest resentment at the contemptuous attitude assumed by Europeans towards the Indian writer. There are able men in Indian journalism who would greatly like to get out of this vicious circle, and I have



heard a serious discussion as to whether it would not be possible, when the capital was removed to Delhi, to start there a new kind of Urdu newspaper which would give the native real news about India and be an independent but by no means necessarily a hostile critic of the Government. The difficulties on the mechanical side are, I am afraid, considerable, and they could scarcely be overcome without sympathetic help from English experts ; but I can record with some confidence that there are well-disposed men in Indian journalism who are very much alive to the shortcomings of the vernacular Press and anxious to remedy them, if they can.

The great gap in Indian life, as it strikes the Western eye, is the lack of a middle-class. The outrageous, extravagant palace and harem of the Maharajah which you may see towering over the mud huts of his subjects in the Native States, symbolizes a great deal in India. Over a large part of

the land there is nothing to fill the gap between the prince and the peasant, the very rich merchant and the coolie. All that variety of occupations which give employment with comfortable incomes to educated young men in Europe is yet to seek. The young Indian is shut in to three alternatives. He must become an official, go to the Bar, or earn a living as a journalist. But the official places are not nearly enough to go round; the excessive multiplication of pleaders is a great evil and tends to breed more litigation among a people who are by nature inordinately litigious; and an excessive supply of newspapers is certainly not a blessing and may be a curse. A considerable number of quite well-to-do and well-born young men are being supported by their parents in small official posts with salaries that scarcely give them pocket-money, simply in order that they may say they have an official position. Many more

are appealing in vain to the dispensers of patronage and becoming disaffected because, having sacrificed everything to get the necessary education, they are balked of what they think to be its legitimate reward. A highly intelligent young Indian who was travelling back on the same ship with me told me that he was going to England to "learn tanning and the Bar." Most heartily I wish him success in the former enterprise. Young Indians who will go to Europe to learn tanning, engineering, smelting, casting, or any other industry that can be carried on in India, will be doing themselves and their country a great service. One hears much talk about "economic development" among educated Indians in these days, and, though it is vague, we may count it gain that the idea should be in the air. In the meantime "we do not discharge our duty merely by denouncing or ridiculing the Babus, who are

what we have made them ; we have to seek positive and constructive policies which will convince the Indians that we are developing their estate as faithful trustees and giving them opportunities which they could not obtain for themselves. •

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The visitor who has filled himself with literature of unrest will be pleasantly surprised by many aspects of the Indian scene. The Government is, beyond all doubt, able, honest, and disinterested ; the position looks immensely strong in all material respects, and the visit of the King has proved the existence of great reserves of loyalty among the masses of the people. There is little to repent of or to recriminate about in the past ; the future is full of hope, and the problems to be worked out are of fascinating interest. But the question for ourselves, as for all

conquering nations, is whether, having got to the end of glory and adventure, we can develop in peace anything like the same energy that we displayed in conquest. Not infrequently in India one hears the complaint, among civilians as well as soldiers, that the service in these days offers so few opportunities. The soldier longs for a "show," by which he means an expedition of some sort, to vary the monotony of life in his station. The civilian finds that no visible reward attends his effort to keep the peace among turbulent tribes, or his laborious administration of a district where nothing happens and the thermometer may be 120 degrees in the shade. The fall in the value of the rupee and the increase in the cost of living have at the same time seriously reduced his emoluments, and though there is a certain pension to follow, yet a man who has only one life to live will not

for choice take that one the main attraction of which is the prospect of escaping from it at a comparatively early age. If India is to be successfully administered in the long run, it will only be by men whose imagination is fired by the task, and who feel the interest and fascination of the problems that she presents. There are many such men in India at the present time, but London life has strong attractions for the class of clever young men from whom the service is recruited, and some very keen observers express doubts whether the supply can be maintained, unless the area of choice is somehow enlarged.

If ever Great Britain quitted India it would be because she had lost faith in her cause. The great English administrators who worked in India in the last century were eminently men of faith. They believed that they had a providential mission to govern the country; they held and openly professed

the old Liberal doctrine that it should eventually be taught to govern itself. Herbert Edwardes spoke of "the noble policy of first fitting India for freedom and then setting her free." Sir John Malcolm declared that he "looked back with shame to the days when he had considered himself the superior of the natives with whom he was called upon to associate." There has been a certain decay of faith in these high maxims during the last twenty years. Men who talk thus are supposed to be faddists or seditionists, in either case to be slaughtered and scarified with all the resources of Kipling-esque invective. And yet, if these maxims are to be abandoned, what is to be found to put in their place? A subtle corrosive is applied to the entire system when Englishmen begin to ask why they are in India and are unable to answer the question. Men of the highest intelligence will not, when the initial romance is ended, exile themselves merely to

serve an alien race in the capacity of officials or merely to secure a commercial advantage to the people of Great Britain. That must be a perfunctory task to be performed by dutiful officials for a wage, and dutiful officials will never make a great thing of the Indian Empire. The late James Darmesteter, in his "*Lettres sur l'Inde*," which in many respects pays a handsome tribute to British rule, draws a slightly malicious contrast between the old and the new type of Anglo-Indian. The old type, he says, "spent his whole life in India without ever going home, and lived like an Oriental with his native harem," whereas the new type "is an exile whose dream is to get back as soon as possible to his London club, who counts the days waiting for the leave to which he is entitled every three years, and who, when once he has finished his daily task, whether he be judge, officer, collector, or chaplain, would die of ennui if he had not



lawn-tennis, cricket, and sport." M. Darmesteter heightens the contrast for the sake of effect, but undoubtedly the fact that so few Englishmen have any abiding home in India is one of the great difficulties of the Indian problem.

But even as I write, I can hear the voice of the Anglo-Indian protesting against the presumption of the new-comer who ventures to talk about the holy mysteries. A dozen times in the last few weeks I have been assured by experienced officials that they know nothing whatever about India. They thought they knew everything, they will tell you, when they had been six weeks in the country, but every year they have lived in it they have discovered that they knew less, and now they are quite certain that they know nothing. The old Oxford man can trace this form of speech right back to his undergraduate days, when it was freely employed by philosophy tutors and fourth-

year men for the correction of freshmen and juniors, and he recognizes its intention when it is addressed to him in India. Yet it is impossible to be in India for even a short time without feeling that there is real danger in this attitude of official nescience, and in the sense of overwhelming objections attending all possible courses of action which afflicts some excellent men in India. I myself have listened to a highly accomplished official for the best part of an hour while he has proved to me that the Government of India can do nothing in any direction. It can make no concessions to Hindus without alienating Mohammedans, and none to Mohammedans without offending Hindus. It cannot be friends with the Bengali without making enemies of the Ruling Princes and rich gentlemen, who are determined, come what may, not to be ruled by Babus. It can do nothing for young India which will not put it wrong with old India. And so on

through a long series of antithetical propositions, each of which lands you in a separate impasse. The narrative is richly furnished with detail, and it all sounds intensely reasonable, but so many excellent reasons against doing anything do in effect reduce one to a state of confused helplessness. So perhaps on the whole no particular harm is done if an outsider plunges in and endeavours to bring an inexperienced intelligence to bear on the Indian scene. For what does impress one, at the end of it all, is that a Government which makes experiments and makes mistakes is far more likely to make a good thing of India than one which is tepid, sceptical, and academic.

